

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview. Short Films: “Is Secession Legal” and “Ron Paul Right, Thought Controllers Wrong, on Secession” (25 Minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

These two interesting short films (8:43 and 8:50) explain the sensibility, constitutionality, and rationality of secession. **NOTE:** You can play both these films at 1.25 speed with no problem following them.

Instructions

1. Play the short film “Ron Paul Right, Thought Controllers Wrong, on Secession” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPn-vYH2eYc>, have students discuss in pairs/groups first, ask students for their thoughts as a class, and (suggested) ask these questions:
 - What questions about the size of government and the size of a nation does this discussion raise? *Whether a government can be too big to be effective, and whether a nation’s size is set in stone; what’s wrong with breaking into smaller, more localized states/nations?*
 - What points about secession’s constitutionality did you recognize? *AWV, but students should remember that Article I, Section 8 doesn’t give the U.S. government power to stop it; Article I, Section 10 doesn’t prohibit it to the states; the Ninth Amendment says that just because the Constitution lists things the U.S. government may not do doesn’t mean those are the ONLY things it may not do; and the Tenth Amendment clearly says that stopping states from leaving is not a U.S. government power, since it wasn’t granted to it.*
 - What proof is offered for state sovereignty? *They had their own militaries, vessels of war, government branches, ratifying conventions for the Constitution, etc. Just because they joined a union and delegated some powers to the U.S. government doesn’t mean they lose their sovereignty.*
 - How do the speakers respond to the common claim, “The war settled the question on secession!”? *Violence doesn’t morally settle issues, or bullies and bank robbers would be correct!*
2. Play the short film “Is Secession Legal?” here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQkZp7iCX1w>, have students discuss in pairs/groups first, ask students for their thoughts as a class, and (suggested) ask these questions:
 - What did the Articles of Confederation say about states? *That they were sovereign, and later the U.S. Constitution only had limited delegated powers.*
 - What did Rhode Island, New York, and Virginia specifically put in their state constitutions? *The explicit right to secede if they believed the U.S. government was not representing their interests.*
 - What about the slavery issue scares some into hesitating to support secession? *Many today argue that if you support secession, it must be for slavery. But to repeat, non-slave states threatened to secede many times.*
 - What mindset do many Americans have about big government? Why do you think this is true? *Many support a “huge government should do everything for us” mentality, and they can’t visualize the benefits of smaller, more localized governments. Of course, as the speakers point out, when states withdrew from communist Russia during its breakup, many praised this...so why can’t they apply it to their own states? Many limited-government advocates who criticize the massive overreach of the U.S. government somehow can’t extend their thinking to just getting rid of it and allowing the individual states to reassert their status as smaller sovereign nations.*
Why is it true? No doubt because 85 to 90 percent of American children attend government schools for 13 to 17 years of their lives, and this is the dominant view taught.
 - How should Christians think differently about secession than non-Christians who support limited government? *AWV, but for example, a Christian could be happy and thankful if a state’s secession ended in more limited government, but shouldn’t join in any potential violence involved in the overthrow of a government.*