

David McGrath: Let's ditch the Electoral College, plus 9 other no-brainer resolutions for the new year

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Members of the Supreme Court sit for a group portrait at the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington on Oct. 7, 2022, following the addition of Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. (J. Scott Applewhite/AP)

On Jan. 1, 1968, I made a New Year's resolution to quit cigarettes.

I lasted barely a month, during which I often awoke in the middle of the night, heart racing, following a nightmare in which Marianne would break up with me after catching me smoking. I repeated the resolution in 1969 and then each January for the next seven years. It wasn't until 1975 that I snuffed out my last Marlboro in the ashtray.

Even so, I was not completely faithful to the promise I made because I substituted cigars for cigarettes, which are just as bad and in some ways worse — throat, mouth and esophageal cancer — though I never fully inhaled, at least not on purpose.

Subsequently, through the 1980s and '90s, I resolved and failed again and again to quit cigars, until 2008, when I said a final farewell to all forms of tobacco. Admittedly, I had to substitute Tootsie Pops for my Cohibas and Garcia y Vegas to assuage my oral fixation. But lollipops, most would agree, are not considered cheating.

The point I'm making is that it took me 40 years to fulfill my original resolution. It sounds like a ridiculous amount of time, and some may even think way too late to do any good.

But it was worth the trouble because, first, I am alive. And second, I've had 16 years of robust health since stopping and expect many more years to come.

In much the same way, Americans should consider a handful of other life and death resolutions for 2024. As with my smoking, the country has tried and failed with some of them for years. And it may take even longer before we get it in gear.

What follows are 10 resolutions whose necessity few would deny and which we should continue to strive to implement, come hell, high water or 40 more years:

- Disband the Electoral College. A Pew Research Center survey this year found that nearly [two-thirds of Americans](#) want the presidency determined by the popular vote instead of by the college, an archaic institution that led to our having five presidents whom the majority did not want.
- Outlaw boxing. While sports such as football, hockey and soccer continually explore ways to minimize or eliminate concussions, the main goal in boxing is to *cause* them, better known as knockouts. The American Medical Association and every other major medical association in the world want the Neanderthal sport banned once and for all.

- Set term limits for the Supreme Court on which justices are currently appointed for life. [A University of Massachusetts at Amherst poll](#) this year found that a majority of Americans want such limits. The court's recent politicization, along with ethical scandals involving Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, has accentuated the need.

- “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” That is the Equal Rights Amendment, first introduced to Congress a century ago. Yet, 12 states, incredibly, have yet to ratify it. 2024 can and should be the year that voters in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma and Utah pressure their lawmakers to step up to the plate and finally ratify this obvious truth and fundamental human guarantee.

- Stop already with the changing of our clocks in October and March! A YouGov poll conducted this year determined that [62% of Americans](#) want to see an end to the semiannual and unnecessary chore assigned to us by governmental micromanagers. Since the poll found an even split between those who want daylight saving time versus standard time, we

should compromise on the half-hour in between and finally get a decent night's sleep.

- Pass an amendment stipulating a maximum age to run for president. The Constitution did a halfway job in only establishing a minimum age of 35, which the new amendment can conveniently double to set the max. A recent [Quinnipiac University poll](#) shows 61% of Americans are in favor of a cap.
- Approve another constitutional amendment to abolish capital punishment. Since 1973, [195 people wrongly convicted](#) and scheduled for execution have been exonerated, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. That makes 195 indisputable reasons for abolition.
- Resurrect the ban on assault weapons that led to a dramatic [70% decrease](#) in lives lost during the 10-year period it was in effect in this country (1994-2004), according to [a study by injury epidemiologists and trauma surgeons](#). Statista, a research firm, found [in a survey this year](#) that 53% of registered voters are in favor of such a ban that would save hundreds of innocent lives.
- Extend Medicare for everyone. Although the Affordable Care Act greatly improved the nation's health, at least 25 million people in this country

remain uninsured. And in too many cases, families of patients who have insurance must often resort to crowdfunding or other charity events in cases of catastrophic illness. Universal Medicare is an affordable and feasible resolution for our bureaucratically maddening and exorbitantly expensive private system.

- Last but not least: Bring back the classic sitcom “All in the Family.” Not just because we could all use a good laugh from arguably the No. 1 comedy of all time, but also because its creator, Norman Lear, who died Dec. 5 at age 101, [showed how focusing on our common humanity](#) can build bridges between political factions. Who better than the flawed but authentic Archie Bunker as a refreshing alternative to cable news!

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