

DRAWING IN A TIME OF FEAR & LIES • WEEKEND

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Incarceration

Joe Arpaio's actions and Donald Trump's pardon are flagrant attacks on citizens' rights and protections.

Dan Mills | 2 days ago



Dan Mills, "Incarceration Rate/Freedom Ranking by State" (2014), acrylic and ink on printed map on paper, 22 1/2 x 3 inches

We all know that the Declaration of Independence is a document laying out fundamental principles of justice and citizen's rights. And we know that the US Constitution is the document that establishes the rules and procedures to carry out the Declaration. The absence of an administrative state (or a deliberately weakened state) will result in no one (or a disempowered staff) overseeing rules and procedures. And this leads to a loss of constitutional protections. These protections are designed to be upheld by the president. For the people. The undermining of government offices weakens the ability of other branches of government to keep the executive branch in check.

The current president's behavior reveals both ignorance of and disdain for the rule of law. Trump's statements reveal his authoritarian vision of the presidency, and his actions reveal his contempt for these founding documents. Consider his recent pardon of the lawbreaking former Arizona sheriff, Joe Arpaio, who was found guilty of violating the constitutional rights of citizens by using racial profiling to jail Latinos — who died at an alarming rate while incarcerated. Arpaio's actions and Trump's pardon are flagrant attacks on citizens' rights and protections.

Regardless of political ideology, we all believe in the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Now is a good time to read and reread these two important founding American documents (linked below). Then as informed citizens, it is critical that we hold our leaders accountable. Contact local, state, and national elected officials and make your voice heard, go to town hall meetings, and vote.

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>

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