AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONALISM

VOLUME I: STRUCTURES OF GOVERNMENT

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Supplementary Material

Chapter 12: The Contemporary Era – Introduction

*Donald J. Trump*, **Inaugural Address** (2017)

*In 2016, the New York real estate mogul and reality television celebrity announced what many assumed would be a short-lived and vainglorious campaign for the Republican Party nomination for the presidency. In an extremely crowded field, however, Trump proved to have a both a substantial fan base and a knack for commanding media attention. A longtime Democrat and political novice, Trump had little commitment to modern Republican orthodoxies. He campaigned against the party elites as much as he campaigned against Democratic status quo and managed to pull off a surprise victory against his more established Republican opponents. Many then assumed that his candidacy was doomed and that Barack Obama’s secretary of state Hillary Clinton would succeed him to the White House. Election night brought the shocking news that Trump had eked out a narrow victory over his Democratic rival. His inaugural address continued the populist themes of his campaign. Trump’s most ardent supporters were angry, and he channeled their anger against the political leaders of both parties and the cultural and economic elites who they thought ignored their interests.*

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Today's ceremony, however, has very special meaning. Because today we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another or from one party to another, but we are transferring power from Washington, DC, and giving it back to you, the people.

For too long, a small group in our Nation's Capital has reaped the rewards of Government while the people have borne the cost. Washington flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth. Politicians prospered, but the jobs left, and the factories closed. The establishment protected itself, but not the citizens of our country. Their victories have not been your victories; their triumphs have not been your triumphs; and while they celebrated in our Nation's Capital, there was little to celebrate for struggling families all across our land.

That all changes, starting right here and right now, because this moment is your moment: It belongs to you. It belongs to everyone gathered here today and everyone watching all across America. This is your day. This is your celebration. And this, the United States of America, is your country.

What truly matters is not which party controls our Government, but whether our Government is controlled by the people. January 20, 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this Nation again. The forgotten men and women of our country will be forgotten no longer. Everyone is listening to you now.

. . . .

But for too many of our citizens, a different reality exists: Mothers and children trapped in poverty in our inner cities; rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our Nation; an education system, flush with cash, but which leaves our young and beautiful students deprived of all knowledge; and the crime and the gangs and the drugs that have stolen too many lives and robbed our country of so much unrealized potential.

This American carnage stops right here and stops right now. We are one Nation, and their pain is our pain, their dreams are our dreams, and their success will be our success. We share one heart, one home, and one glorious destiny.

The oath of office I take today is an oath of allegiance to all Americans.

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