

Kern County: The Path to Secession and a New Constitution

By Don Durrett

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Books by Don Durrett

A Stranger From the Past

Conversations With an Immortal

Finding Your Soul

New Thinking for the New Age

Spirit Club

Finding Your Soul Workbook

Last of the Gnostics

The Gathering

How to Invest in Gold & Silver: A Complete Guide with a Focus on Mining Stocks

The Demise of America: The Coming Breakup of The United States and What Will Replace It

I place economy among the first and most important virtues, and public debt as the greatest of dangers to be feared. To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt.

– Thomas Jefferson

Beware the greedy hand of government thrusting itself into every corner and crevice of industry.

– Thomas Paine

When the people find that they can vote themselves money, that will herald the end of the republic.

– Benjamin Franklin

For Jane Watts, my English 1A and 1B teacher at Bakersfield College,
who inspired me to be a writer.

Introduction

This book is written with the assumption that America is on the verge of an economic crisis. A crisis so severe that it will lead to a secession movement within our borders. If that assumption turns out to be false, then this will be a work of hyperbole and perhaps a good “what-if” book. But if it’s right, then this book has important concepts about reorganizing the country that may need to be considered.

I have believed since the early 1990s that Texas would secede first, and form The Republic of Texas. That belief has become stronger as our economic system approaches bankruptcy. Texas is ripe for secession for a number of reasons. The most important being that it existed as an independent country from 1836 to 1846. Other reasons include: Texans are extremely independent; they love being Texans; they love their flag, which you see waving everywhere in the state; they do not like Washington D.C.; they have an immigration problem that Washington is ignoring; they are the only state with their own electrical grid; and they have an abundance of oil, which they can monetize.

The secession movement that I envisioned as early as 1991 is now alive and well. In 2014, Crimea voted to secede from Ukraine; Venice voted to secede from Italy; Scotland voted for independence; and Catalonia in Spain is close to voting. More than a dozen additional secession movements exist throughout the world. In the U.S., there are secession movements in Texas, Colorado, California, and Maryland.

This book is based on the premise that Texas will secede after an economic crisis, which will

lead to a series of victorious secessions movements throughout the country. After Texas secedes, the entire country will break up into regional countries resulting in a very weak national government like the European Union. Not only do states become new countries, but so do some counties.

I chose Kern County and Bakersfield as my model location, because it is both my hometown and it has many of the vital requirements for a victorious secession movement. This area is a prime agricultural area, and has large oil production. These two industries practically make it crash-proof. All it will need in the future is good leadership in order to easily thrive. Also, it is not a highly populated area, making it ideal for avoiding riots and chaos. And because it is an agricultural and oil producing community, the majority of the citizens are hard working people. This isn't a retirement community. There is a very strong work ethic in this county, with a lot of blue collar workers. This is a conservative patriotic community, that would never think of seceding today, or seceding first. But it is also pragmatic, and may seize an opportunity if it arises. If secession is the only way to rebuild the community, I feel Kern County will likely choose it.

I use a story to show what could happen. While the odds of this story coming true are infinitesimally small, parts of it could become the future in some manner. Once I got the idea to write a story about secession, I felt compelled to begin immediately, and the draft was written in only two months. Society is clearly strained and in dire need of change, and it is becoming apparent that the type of change needed will not be forthcoming from the government.

Once I had the idea to write about secession I knew I had to write a new constitution. That seemed the only way to fix our problems. I've been a harsh critic of our current system (political, economic, social) and want something better. Let's face it, society has its share of entrenched problems that need to be fixed. We have created a place where the majority or people are living with a lack of contentment. It's time for a better way to live. It's time to start over.

Our problems have progressed to the point where I am tired of people referring to America as the greatest country on Earth. I think that used to be true, but no more. We can no longer claim to be number one, without other countries smirking at our hubris. They know we have fallen, and so should we. If we are such a great country, then I don't think the secession movement would be progressing. And I don't think that our problems would have become so intractable.

It's ironic that I'm going to write about solutions, because I don't believe there are any solutions to our current problems—unless we start over. Secession and a new constitution allow for a complete reorganization of a community or a country. Reorganization makes change possible. One of my previous books, titled, *The Demise of America*, conveys the premise that America is doomed to economic collapse and reorganization. That premise carries to this book, although this time I offer solutions.

The secession movement today is about reorganizing society. The biggest reason for these movements is that citizens are tired of being controlled by an ineffective large government. The fictional storyline of this book is different from actual secession movements. The secession of Kern County shows what happens after the fall of the U.S. Economy, and after the breakup of the U.S. I'm not talking about stumble, but a full-fledged fall, where we are bankrupt and we do not recover.

Under this scenario, the U.S. becomes divided into a series of countries. The national government becomes very weak and has little impact on the affairs of the countries. Each of these new countries will write new constitutions. Kern County could possibly follow the path that I layout in this book, but it is only a model and vision of one possibility. It is inevitable in my opinion that this fall of the U.S. is coming, and reorganizing with new constitutions is likely something that will unfold.

It's 2014 and much of what I'm going to write about in this book will be outdated very shortly. However, the current state of the U.S. economic situation is the reason for the book. I need to write

about it even if it will soon be history. Most likely you will read this book a few years down the road, after secession becomes a hot topic.

The U.S. Economy is heading for a collapse that will change our way of life. It's unavoidable in my opinion and puts us on a collision course with secession and the breakup of the country. It's that transparent to me. This is why I think Texas is destined to secede. If Texas is still a state by 2020, I'll be very surprised. Change is coming soon and it will likely pick up speed once it begins. If I had to give a date for Texas secession, then I would bet on 2018, which is not that far away.

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This book will be controversial for many reasons. Some people will not like me popularizing or advocating secession. Others will not like me portraying civil disobedience. I did not want to glamorize civil disobedience, but I thought it was unlikely that a new country in the middle of California could be formed in a completely innocuous manner. There are a lot of interest groups that will be impacted if the constitution I propose is approved. The list is quite long: corporations, corporate employees, government employees, pensioners, veterans, the disabled, schools, healthcare workers, financial industries. The change that is suggested is quite revolutionary. Perhaps the vision is too broad, but I think that is the only solution.

I also want to state for the record that I wrote this new constitution without any notes in about two days. All of the ideas in the constitution are my own (except the preamble, which I borrowed from Thomas Jefferson). I write this down because I know that in the future there are going to be many constitutions written, and I think I might be the first. I wrote this new constitution hoping to fix all of our problems and create a community that is prosperous, harmonious, ethical, joyful, humane, and a

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wonderful place to live. I think I got it right, but we'll probably never know.

Don Durrett

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Preface

It happened fast, much faster than anyone expected. One late Friday afternoon, an AP news release stated that Saudi Arabia was no longer going to accept U.S. dollars for their oil exports. By Monday morning the global stock markets were in a tailspin. The U.S. stock market opened down 5% and finished the day down 8% from a bombardment of selling. The days that followed only seemed to get worse. Within two weeks, the global stock markets were all down more than 15% or more, and the U.S. stock markets were down 25%.

The television financial news pundits tried to calm fears by postulating that the pull-back was not unusual after a long multi-year rally. Politicians and the President tried to extoll the virtues of a so-called recovery, but the dominos continued to fall. The drop in the stock markets decreased liquidity as banks hunkered down and stopped making loans. This left many companies scrambling to rollover debt in order to remain solvent. It was the crash of 2008 all over again, and several major financial institutions were on the verge of bankruptcy.

A major New York bank had to be bailed out, then two major insurance companies. The Federal Reserve Bank printed the money and gave it to them. We were in crisis mode again. One corporation after another started announcing layoffs to protect their stock share price, including their CEO's job. Then the second shoe dropped; China started selling their U.S. Treasury bonds, they were running for the sidelines, hoping to sell before the economy crashed. They recognized that the U.S. wasn't going to be able to survive this crisis. After they sold \$250 billion bonds in one week, the Japanese were forced

to sell some of their U.S. Treasury bonds. They couldn't sit on the sidelines and allow China to sell all of their bonds. No one wanted to be left holding the bag of worthless debt.

As predicted by many analysts, once the bond selling began, interest rates rose. The U.S. Government was furious with the Chinese for starting this panic, but what could the U.S. do? Start a war over something that we did to ourselves? The Chinese were looking at the long term and recognized that we had likely destroyed our economy. They were going to take us down economically and then focus on the rest of the world for their trading partners.

Once interest rates rose, the derivatives market blew up. A financial derivative is a fancy term for financial insurance. However, the \$700 trillion derivatives market had always been a charade, because the holders of the derivatives were insuring each other. If one major financial company failed, they all failed. The Federal Reserve had to choose between bailing out a group of large financial institutions, or buying all of China's and Japan's U.S. Treasury bonds. This much money printing would surely cause hyper-inflation. They were trapped and the U.S. Government had no choice but to default on their national debt.

After the default, U.S. Government spending was cut dramatically, because no more debt could be raised. Without EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) cards to pay for food, riots erupted throughout the country. Most of the large cities had to declare martial law. After nine months of rioting and economic malaise, Texas seceded and formed The Republic of Texas. The secession movement in the U.S. had officially begun.

The default caused the U.S. Dollar to devalue and it continued to drop. This created an increase in prices for food and other necessities, while at the same time there were massive layoffs in healthcare, finance, government jobs, consumer retail, and the services sector. Small businesses were closing in waves. It didn't appear that any help was on the way. The citizens believed it was going to get worse

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before it got better.

Within three years the United States no longer existed. It had broken up in to a series of countries. All that was left of the United States government was a feckless group of bureaucrats who tried to help the new countries develop inter-country commerce and trade laws.

Chapter One: It Begins

John was forty-three. Six feet tall and handsome with a calm disposition. He was well-read in a variety of subjects with an MBA. He could have been a college professor, but had no interest in joining the establishment. His hobbies were writing metaphysical books and public lecturing. He was a deep thinker and a spiritual man, a philosopher. His wife Julie provided grounding to their life. She was an artist and was much more practical. They did not have any children. They tried to conceive when they were first married, but were unsuccessful. They decided that children were not necessary for their happiness did not pursue fertility doctors.

For fun they liked to watch movies together and travel. Without kids around, they tended to travel a lot. A four day weekend to Hawaii was not unusual for them. They were deeply in love and enjoyed each other's company. Both of them were social people and liked to hang out with friends from time to time. However, because of their comfort level with each other, they tended to spend most of their time together.

John had recently lost his job as computer systems analyst and now spent most of his time reading online news and various postings by other Internet users. That day he read a news item on Zerohedge that Humboldt County was planning a referendum to secede from California. They wanted to form their own country and grow marijuana. After all, Northern California was perhaps the best place in the world to grow pot. John had read of other county secession movements, and clearly it had come to California. He had an epiphany. Why not his own Kern County?

It had a low population of less than 1 million people over 8,000 square miles. The only city of any size was Bakersfield at 350,000 people. The only other city of any size was Delano, which was relatively small at 55,000 people. The other nine cities in the county were all small. Thus, they had plenty of space for everyone and didn't have a crowding problem.

The assets of Bakersfield and Kern County were substantial. There were vast acres of high quality farmland. Thus, they could easily feed themselves and export the rest. Next, they had oil. Kern County was the largest oil producing county in the country, with over a billion barrels of reserves. Between oil production and agriculture, the county was practically crash-proof, and provided a foundation to the local economy.

The oil and agriculture related industries required substantial financial services from the large flow of income they provided. This made Bakersfield's banking and insurance industries fairly strong and stable. It is not an understatement to say there was a lot of money in Bakersfield, and if you drove around you would see a lot of affluent areas.

There was a local university, but most of the locals were educated at colleges in other cities and returned to live here. It could be said that the local population was well educated and there was a strong sense of business acumen.

So, Bakersfield wasn't a backwater city. They could hold their own with any city in America. Bill Thomas represented Kern County and was chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee during the George W. Bush administration. Kevin McCarthy was the House Majority Leader during the Obama administration. Both of these politicians were well respected conservative Republicans. Bakersfield is considered one of the most conservative cities not only in California, but the entire nation, although that had been slowly changing because of demographics.

These changes included a recent influx of immigration from Mexico. In 1970, Bakersfield was

about 70% Caucasian, but today that figure is below 50%. This influx has impacted the community in significant ways. Many first and second generation Hispanic Americans have found it difficult to thrive economically. The result of which has led to more gang affiliations and lower class neighborhoods. Moreover, the education system in the Bakersfield City School District has had poorer results in recent years, with the same bifurcation witnessed throughout the country, with many affluent families leaving for the Panama School District in the suburbs.

John knew from growing up in Bakersfield that it was changing dramatically. No longer was Bakersfield going to be a conservative white community. Now there were two major diverse groups (Democratic Hispanics and Republican whites) that had to find a way to get along.

John thought to himself, we have agriculture, oil, and water. Plus, we don't have a large population. We have a big advantage over most of the country. We could easily go it alone and finance ourselves.

He decided to build a web page called *Kern County: The Road to Secession*. He would blog every day and begin his own movement. He didn't see any other hope for the economy. From his perspective it was only going to get worse. It was time to go it alone and find the answers to problems locally. California was broke. They either changed or withered away. It was time for proactive change, and not the kind of change that politicians were always promising.

Using a website template, he had the website up and running in only a few days. On the main page he posted his reason for secession,¹ along with his proposed constitution.² He created an excellent forum where anyone who joined for free could make their own posts, and anyone could reply to a post as a guest.

1 Refer to Afterword at the end of the book.

2 Refer to Appendix.

It didn't take long before the forum became a busy place, with 1,000+ comments every day. At first, nearly all of the comments came from outside of Kern County, but over time more and more people from the local area began to post.

John decided to create a Facebook page and a Bakersfield Meetup group. One of the poster's on his website offered a large meeting room where they could discuss the new constitution.

The Meetup group list had 500 people after only two weeks. The first meeting was scheduled for the first Saturday of the month at 1 p.m. John purchased a low cost public address system for the large room. The display screen showed the title of the presentation: *A New Constitution*.

“Good afternoon, and thank you for coming.” He opened.

Many in the audience stood and began clapping. John was taken aback and did not expect such a response. He smiled and bowed. He looked at the crowd and recognized a few friends, which gave him inspiration.

“Thanks for the reception. It appears there are a lot of like-minded people in the audience. We have recognized that the U.S. economic and political model has failed, or is in the process of failing. It's time for a new beginning.

“I'm going to present my proposal for a new constitution. I want you to keep an open mind and recognize that this proposal is only for Kern Country. It is not a system that necessarily will work for a larger area or larger population.”

John paused. He was wondering if the audience would be receptive to his new constitution. He got the impression that the audience was listening intently, which gave him confidence to continue.

“Today I would like to have a discussion about the Articles and the Bill of Rights, although I will read the Declaration, Guiding Principles, Overall Philosophy, and Businesses Philosophy. We will talk about these at our next meeting. With our limited time today, I would like to try to cover all of the

Articles. If we have enough time, then we will also do the Bill of Rights.

“Okay, let's begin.” He pressed the remote and the first slide appeared.

Declaration

We the people of Isabella desire to form an independent country that provides its people a community based on fairness, freedom, integrity, honor, justice, equality, and respect. The community will exist as a united whole that works together in harmony with cooperation. No one person or one group shall infringe upon the rights of others. Government shall remain limited in scope and size, with the citizens in charge of making all important decisions.

“Oh yeah, by the way, our new country is going to be called Isabella. I thought of calling it Bakersfield or Kern, but Isabella is a beautiful name. And our beautiful Lake Isabella can be leveraged into a country name. I'm open to suggestions if someone has a better name, but it's pretty good.”

John read the slide, then pressed the remote.

Guiding Principles

1. Liberty to be free without encumbrance.
2. Every human a respected sovereign being with equal basic human rights.
3. Opportunity for everyone, and no one deprived of education and basic

necessities.

4. Service to the community and not service to ones self.
5. If a person cries out for help, the community will come to their aid.
6. Crime will not be tolerated.
7. Government kept to a minimal level.
8. Thrive and enjoy life.
9. Reach for your dreams, but you may have to work hard to achieve them.
10. Respect the environment, which includes earth, water, air, and all life forms.

After John read the slide, he pressed the remote.

Overriding Philosophy

We are all neighbors and should treat each other fairly and kindly. We are all equals and should consider the humanity of our actions. Helping one another should be a priority for everyone.

John looked at Julie who was standing nearby. She was wearing a blue mini dress and looked pretty with her long red hair. He smiled at her and then pressed the remote. Anyone paying attention, would have noticed that Julie was part of the lecture. She had a serious demeanor and was watching both John and the crowd intently. Her formal dress and the strategic place where she stood was a clue

to her importance. When John smiled at her, it was obvious she was involved in some way.

Business Philosophy

Our goal is sustainability over growth, stability over complexity, quality of life over achievement. While competition is required in a capitalistic system, conflict and battle do not have over shadow our humanity.

Article I

Section 1

The will be no elected officials or politicians. Government employees will serve 1-year terms appointed by decision review boards (DRBs). Citizens of Isabella will be obligated to serve once every 5 years. They can volunteer for jobs or be assigned. Medical exemptions will be available for the infirm.

John read the slide and then looked across the audience to measure their response. “This reading will take a few hours to get through. The purpose of this meeting is to get feedback and share ideas. However, if we spend too much time on each section we will never finish. Two people will be given the opportunity to ask questions on each section, and then we can have a question and answer session at the end of the presentation if there is time. There are two microphones that can be passed around for each question. Raise your hand and we will find you.”

John and Julie had asked two of their friends. Tammy and Kelley to be volunteers to help with

his presentation. They were in charge of handing out microphones.

Immediately ten people raised their hands. While the volunteers handed out the microphones, John had one final request. “Please stand to ask your question.”

John pointed at someone standing with a microphone.

“John, first I want to thank you for taking the initiative of making this happen. My question is how much will we get paid for our one year of government service? And will our employers be able to fire us if we leave our place of work for a year?”

John replied, “Your second question is easy to answer. Once you've read the entire constitution, you will know that the foundation of the law is based on a concept called Disturbing the Harmony of the Community. Anyone who fires an employee for doing their duty to the community would clearly be in violation and sentenced by an arbitration panel of their peers

“Your first question is more complicated. The annual salaries for working for the government will be determined by the main DRB. I would expect that there will be different pay scales for different jobs. Perhaps we could have three or four different tiers. All of this can be decided by the DRB.”

John pointed to the only other member of the audience who was standing.

“My question is about the first main DRB board. I understand from your website that the DRB will consist of five men and five women and they will replace themselves, but who appoints the first group?”

John paused. “I've thought about it, but I haven't written anything down yet. From my perspective we want the first group to be carefully selected because they are going to organize the government by selecting various DRBs and arbitration panels. They will also set the first minimum wage and first government salaries. And they will have the authority to enact new laws. So this will be a very powerful group of people for our first year of existence.

“I think the first group should be selected using an election. Each candidate can write an essay explaining why they should be on the first DRB and post it on my website. In addition, they will be asked to include their biography. Then the public can post their responses to the essays. This information can be used for an online voting system to elect the first DRB.”

John pressed the remote, and read the next slide.

Article I

Section 2

Decision review board members will serve 1-year terms and will appoint their replacements. A citizen can only serve on a DRB once every 5 years. Each DRB will consist of 10 members, with 7 members representing a quorum. The number of DRBs necessary for conducting government businesses can be determined by the main DRB. All secondary DRBs shall hold the same level of authority, with the main DRB as the final arbiter.

John pointed at the next questioner who was standing.

“There seems to be a lot of detail missing. For instance, how often will the DRB meet? What kind of laws can they create? Are there any checks and balances?”

“They will meet as often as they deem necessary,” John replied. “Since they have to vote for all new laws in public and take direct questions from citizens, I would expect them to meet publicly quite often. They will be full-time government employees for one year and have a duty to uphold. They can

create any law they deem necessary.

“As for checks and balances, that is the beauty of this constitution. No one has the opportunity to amass any power. The entire government is replaced every year. Any decisions that were deemed inappropriate can be overturned by the next main DRB or by the citizens. Overturning laws is in another section.”

John pointed at the next questioner with a microphone.

“Why does the main DRB get to choose their successors? Won't they just choose their family or friends?”

“This method will create continuity and will ensure that the constitution is respected,” John replied. “No one will appoint a successor they don't trust. I wanted to eliminate politicians and avoid political elections, but we can't eliminate elections completely. For, as you will find out, there must be a way to hear the voice of citizens to revoke bad laws. However, we can eliminate annual elections to select government officials. The DRB will want to ensure the continuity of society. I'm confident they will select the best people for the job. Also, each DRB member alone will have very little power. Without a majority vote, new laws cannot be passed. For this reason, it will be very difficult for a bad law to get passed.”

John paused and pressed the remote control, then read the next section.

Article I

Section 3

There shall be no judges or juries. The main DRB will have the authority to assign or delegate to other DRBs, the task of creating 1-year arbitration panels for all disputes, crimes, and misdemeanors. There can

be several DRBs and several arbitration panels...whatever the main DRB deems necessary.

John pointed to one of the standing questioners. He was beginning to feel confident that he had the crowd's support and that the evening was going to go smoothly. Julie had given him a pep talk before the lecture and gave him enough inspiration to read the constitution and answer that audience's questions. Her support made it that much easier. Knowing that she believed in it was a powerful catalyst.

The woman with the microphone said, "If I understand this correctly, government will consist of DRBs and arbitration panels. All of which will consist of five men and five women, and requiring seven people for a quorum. The DRBs and panels will consist of citizens who work for the government for one year, and are paid a salary based on what the main DRB decides."

John nodded.

"Okay, then does this mean the main DRB has the most authority and can tell the other DRBs and panels what to do? Can they fire people? Also, what about expenses, travel, and vacations? Who decides all of these details?"

John smiled. "Great questions. The answer is simple, yes, the main DRB can do all of these things. They are the leaders who get to decide what is in the best interest of the community. This one group is where the power resides and it is their responsibility to make the right decisions. They can decide all of the details you listed or they can delegate that authority to a secondary DRB."

John pointed for the next question.

"It seems to me that the arbitration panels are going to replace our court system. Is this wise? Do we really want to eliminate judges and juries?"

“I think so,” John replied. “The problem with judges is they are biased. There is no such thing as an impartial judge. For this reason, we need to do something different if we are going to change our ways. Society has become corrupt, and the court system is part of that corruption. As long as the new arbitration panels are impartial, I think the system will work wonderfully.”

John looked at a man in the front row who seemed to be skeptical. He decided to expound on the differences between the current justice system and his new proposed system.

“The new arbitration panels will be appointed in a non-political way. There will be no political parties and no organizations. Those who sit on arbitration panels or DRBs will do so as servers to the community. While not all arbitration panels will be completely impartial, you can appeal a decision twice. This is explained in Article I, Section 6. It is unlikely all three panels will be biased.”

John looked at the skeptical man in the front row whose expression did not change. He wondered if had gotten through to him. He pressed the remote and read the next section.

Article I

Section 4

The main DRB has the authority to implement new laws, enter into trade agreements, and coin money. However, these laws and agreements can be re-written and changed by the succeeding DRBs. The citizens can vote to overturn these laws by a majority vote. There shall be no citizen voting to implement laws, only to overturn laws. Moreover, laws should be kept to a minimum (refer to Article II). All main DRB decisions will be made at public meetings.

John pointed to the next questioner.

“The DRB can implement any law? There are no restrictions? What kind of money will they coin? Will there be a treasury department to collect taxes and coin the money? And how can we keep laws to a minimum? How can that be enforced?”

John smiled. “Thank you for the questions. I have a helper here in the front. My wife Julie is writing down the questions in case I forget them. So if I look over at Julie, it's because I forgot the question.

“First of all, yes, the DRB can make any law. However, it is up to the citizens to maintain their constitution. If a law is passed that is contrary to the constitution, the citizens should overturn it. This process is in another article which we will get to.

“Our paper currency will be backed by gold and convertible into gold. It will literally be a gold based monetary system. We will create our own mint and mint our own gold and silver coins. The DRB will be in charge of determining the size of the money supply, but it can only grow at a certain rate annually. This is in another article which we will cover today.

“No, we will not have a treasury department. The mint will be a private company that is paid by the citizens. Taxes can also be collected by a private company. And they can be audited by yet another private company.

“Lastly about your question of how laws can be kept to a minimum? The answer is in the Constitution's guiding principles. However, there is no law or article that prohibits new laws. We can only have faith that the guiding principles are maintained. Creating a statute that we can only have one new law per year makes no sense, because a single law can be a thousand pages or more in length.”