



## McMaken: Three Reasons To Start Taking Secession Seriously

### Description

USA: Last month, the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia released [a new study](#) which showed that, at least among those polled, “roughly 4 in 10 (41%) of Biden and half (52%) of Trump voters at least somewhat agree that it’s time to split the country, favoring blue/red states seceding from the union.”

**Moreover, majorities in both groups agreed there are “many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things” and that “it is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within.”**

One might conclude that people who think that things are generally going well in a country aren’t so concerned with “the evil within” that they think it’s time to “split the country.”

**It seems that President Biden has been unable to “unite” the country after all, in spite of [his promises](#) that it’s “time to heal in America” and that he will “be a president who seeks not to divide, but to unify.” Rather, it appears the country embraces a hard divide over a variety of issues with vaccine mandates and parental rights in public education being only the most current ones.**

At this point, there’s no reason to believe these divides are simply going to go away. Secession is likely to become even more mainstream as has been occurring in recent years, and as the old “[liberal consensus](#)” of the mid-twentieth century recedes ever more into the distant past. Moreover, opponents of secession are clear that they’re not willing to tolerate a separation that would allow Americans in neighboring jurisdictions to embrace other models of society or governance. But in the real world, major political changes can come suddenly and in unexpected ways. In 1987, most still assumed the USSR would continue to exist for many more decades—if not centuries. Because of this, now is the time to begin asking the difficult questions about secession and how military and financial questions can be addressed.

**Considering all this, we see three main reasons why it is increasingly unwise to ignore secession as a serious possibility.**



## **Secession Went Mainstream**

**The first reason we must now take secession seriously is that it's no longer a topic of discussion among the most radical.**

In 2014, for example, a quarter of those polled said [they thought their state should secede](#). By 2018, 39 percent were saying they think a state should “have the final say” as to whether or not that state remains part of the United States. In 2020, [more than a third of those polled](#) said states have a legal right to secede.

Mainstream conservatives increasingly suggest the possibility, [from Rush Limbaugh](#) to Dennis Prager. Indeed, just last week, Prager admitted that [secession offers a chance to live in a country that better reflects one's own values](#). Should secession happen, Prager said, “I would live in a state governed by Judeo-Christian values versus one governed by left-wing values.” Even elderly conservatives are started to grasp the idea: separation brings choice, and choice is better than ossified notions of “patriotism.”

Indeed, it appears it's no coincidence that older conservative operatives like Prager have been among those who are late to warm to the idea of secession. [According to Zogby's 2020 poll](#) on secession, favorable attitudes toward secession decline as the polled group gets older. In the 18-29 year-old group, a majority (52 percent) think states have a legal right to secede. In the over-65 group the number is only 23 percent. In other words, the dogma of national unity is a dogma of older generations. Not only is secession increasingly mainstream, it may be the wave of the future as well.

Meanwhile, members of Congress—including [Iowa's Steven Holt](#) and [Florida's Marjorie Taylor Greene](#)—now openly speak well of secession. They wouldn't say this unless they thought their constituents

agree with them.

Moreover, we might measure the growth of the secessionist position by the number of pundits who now feel the need to condemn it. Once upon a time, secession was regarded as so “out there” that it scarcely deserved any attention at all. No longer. Nowadays, conservative beltway pundits feel the need to go on [rants about it on Fox News](#).

## **The Left’s Unionists Want to Run Your Life**

**A second reason to take secession seriously is the fact that the Left doesn’t seem to be learning anything from the rise of separatism.** Just as many Americans appear to be embracing a posture in opposition to rule from the center, the Left is doubling down on the idea that more local autonomy is not to be tolerated.

A clear example of this is the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act introduced in the US Senate. The legislation, if passed, would give Washington vast new powers in regulating and controlling how states conduct their own elections. Originally, of course, state governments had almost total control in how elections were governed and conducted within each state. This makes sense in a country that began as a collection of sovereign republics. Just as EU member states conduct their elections in a way that’s locally controlled, the same was once true for the US. Over time—as in most areas—the federal government asserted more control. But with the Voting Rights Advancement Act, local control over elections would be virtually abolished with most any changes subject to a federal imprimatur.

Naturally, opposition to surrendering state elections to federal control is denounced as motivated by racism and other nefarious goals. And this is reflective of the Left’s general opposition to secession and decentralization in general. The idea is “we can’t let those people run their own affairs because they’re sure to use local prerogatives for evil.”

For example, when condemning secession in *New York* magazine, Democratic strategist Ed Kilgore made it clear he has no intention of letting people do much of anything without federal “oversight.” He [writes](#):

So might we drift apart more or less peacefully this time around? Possibly, but count me out when it comes to agreeing to a National Divorce. ...[H]ow could I happily accept the accelerated subjugation of women and people of color in a new, adjacent Red America, any more than abolitionists could accept the continuation and expansion of the slavery they hated? Would it really be safe to live near a carbon-mad country in which the denial of climate change was an article of faith? And could I ever trust that a “neighbor” whose leadership and citizens believed their policies reflected the unchanging ancient will of the Almighty would leave our fences intact?

Kilgore can barely contain his contempt. He might as well be saying “If those Red State troglodytes are allowed freedom, they’ll surely embrace a racist and misogynistic dystopia that fills the air with poisonous fumes. These are religious zealots, after all!”

Anyone who doesn’t want to live out his or her life as subject to the whims of men like Kilgore should

take his few moments of candor as an ominous warning. These people will never “happily accept” self-governance outside Washington’s purview because they quite literally equate it with slavery and the hatred of women.

In other words, the more the Left condemns secession in detail—as they must now do because dismissive scoffing no longer works—they only provide additional reasons for why secession is likely the only real solution to the national divide.

## **Now Is Time to Ask the Difficult Questions**

**Finally, the mainstreaming of secession means now is the appropriate time to start asking the difficult questions about how separation would actually take place.**

For example, the issue of nuclear weapons cannot be ignored—although the case of post-Soviet Ukraine shows it’s [not as intractable a problem as many suspect](#). Moreover, the question of the national debt ought to be approached. It will likely also be necessary to admit that under *all realistic* scenarios, a partial default is the likely outcome either with or without secession. And finally, there is the problem of “ethnic” enclaves. Historically, this always comes with secession, as with the ethnic [Russians in the secessionist Baltics](#) or the pro-Spaniard populations left behind throughout Latin America in the nineteenth century. Moreover, how “complete” would this separation be? It is entirely conceivable that a United States with two or more self-governing pieces could nevertheless remain within under a single head of state or within a single military alliance.

In real life, big political changes have a habit of occurring regardless of what the official planners want, and what the official plans say. That is, events have a way of overwhelming what the elites think is the proper way of doing things. But fostering serious discussion now could help avert at least some unpleasant surprises in the longer term. On the other hand, living in denial about secession won’t improve things. And, of course, the matter of secession is not “if” but “when.” All polities come to an end at some point either through disintegration or revolution. In many cases, the world [improves when old states like the Roman Empire collapse](#). The fanciful America-will-last-forever position is something that should seem plausible only to small children or the hopelessly naïve.

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