

Contributions to american democracy



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Kevin Silva 12/8/11 History Accelerated Mr. Binger Contributions To American Democracy Have you ever wondered where we got our governmental ideas from? It turns out that there are three men that influenced our decisions for a democracy by providing the guidelines or basics for the right governmental system. Those men's names are John Locke, Baron De Montesquieu, and Francois Marie Arouet or better known by his pen name Voltaire. They all made great advances that later in time helped us to give rights to all of the people within a country.

John Locke, Baron De Montesquieu, and Voltaire during the Enlightenment contributed to Democracy by developing ideas that gave people more rights and freedoms. John Locke is among the most influential political philosophers of the modern period. In the Two Treatises of Government, he defended the claim that men are by nature free and equal against claims that God had made all people naturally subject to a monarch. " He argued that people have rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and property, that have a foundation independent of the laws of any particular society. (Tuckness). Because of this idea John Locke even went to jail, and he still wanted his philosophies to succeed for the good of the people.

Not only did he introduce natural rights and give freedoms to our American people, but he also influenced the French and Japanese Constitution. By taking Lockes ideas, it truly shows that he was a great philosopher.

Montesquieu also followed this tradition by providing the rights and freedoms to people just like John Locke and other philosophers at the time.

Montesquieu within the natural law tradition, particularly in relation to Thomas Hobbes, and considers to what extent his theory promotes natural

law or natural rights thinking. " (The Witherspoon Institute). Montesquieu argued that man is capable of grasping four laws of nature through direct, practical experience: first, man desires and seeks nourishment for his bodily preservation; second, man desires peace to sustain his bodily well-being; third, man is drawn instinctively to other people; and fourth, the knowledge derived from interaction with others moves him to desire to live in society.

His notions drastically skewed the perception on how others should be treated. Voltaire was a writer, essayist, and philosopher known for his defense of civil liberties, including freedom of religion and free trade. Voltaire wrote plays, poetry, novels, essays, historical and scientific works, and over two thousand books and pamphlets. Voltaire believed that the purpose of an individual is to refine the society in which he lives. This means that the civilian should be engaged in making his country and life better.

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He brought these ideas into our constitution by introducing the idea of free speech, which eventually gave way for people to be engaged in their government. He also was forced to stay at the Bastille for five months because of his lampoons of regency. It showed that his ideas were working, and the public liked them because he had some of his followers visit him in jail. Because of all of Voltaire's contributions to modern day democracy, our country and other countries have used his ideas to contribute to their citizen's lives.

All of these contributions from the Constitution and The Declaration of Independence you now know mostly come from three men, John Locke,
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Montesque, and Voltaire. If it weren't for them, you never know we could have had a completely different government. The things that they did for the citizens of their own country at the time are still going on here in America and everyone should realize that. These three men changed the lives of millions of people around the world.