

# [The frozen republic: how the constitution is paralyzing democracy essay sample](https://assignbuster.com/the-frozen-republic-how-the-constitution-is-paralyzing-democracy-essay-sample/)

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The author, Daniel Lazare, argues that our Founding Fathers’ system of checks and balances which were originally designed to protect our freedom against concentrations of power, do not serve us well today. Lazare argues that the gridlock built into the Founders’ design has to be uprooted because it hurts rather than helps us the way it is. Lazare feels our Constitution basically has never worked well and attributes many of the modern national problems to the obstacles it creates. The author believes the system of checks and balances has created an unresponsive, inefficient government without direction or authority controlled by special interests.

Lazare uses various examples in support of his argument against the checks and balances system our government has inherited from our Founding Fathers. He feels it is excessively cumbersome. Lazare points out how the checks and balances system has failed in several national crisis including the Civil War. He seems to attribute every national crisis we have ever had to the Constitution from the judicial review to equal state suffrage in the Senate. But overall, Lazare feels that the Constitution produces inefficient, chaotic government.

As far as the strengths of the book, I appreciate the perspective of the author on this original argument in that I have never read anything addressing this issue in a similar manner. I do feel this is an issue that does need to be addressed and whether his answers are the answers, at least he is bringing the issue up. It does read as a creative and constructive type of vision and perhaps thought out as well as a single individual could on their own without co-authors or other individuals’ input on the subject matter. I do feel the author did his research in his understanding of the structural problems as relating to the Constitution and slavery. In reading the book, I do agree that the Constitution and the current checks and balance system is not the cure-all. However, it is a really good read I feel regardless of your individual thoughts on the matter. I do agree with the author that the protective structure of the Constitution in some cases ultimately tends to freeze us in 18 th Century thought. The world is evolving so should our Constitution. By seeing our Constitution as something so sacred, as Lazare mentions, we make it too rigid as our world continues to evolve.

One of the rather obvious weaknesses of this argument is that Mr. Lazare oversimplifies the problems presented in the book. Lazare doesn’t make a clear or strong case for reform in presenting his solutions. The historical survey discussed in the book is weak and his overall his case for constitutional inefficiency isn’t strongly convincing and his proposals are not competently sound. Also, the beginning of the book moves very slowly, recapping the history of America as viewed how one would interpret it through the Constitution. Sometimes, he neglects to follow up on his thoughts. For example, I still don’t know why Lazare feels we would have a more progressive government if the House of Representatives were more powerful. Also, I felt there were many issues that would relate to his thoughts on the Constitution that were not touched on at all. Another weakness in this is that not only do I find it unworkable the way it is presented, in general people tend to want less government, not more. I am not convinced the author can see that his “ answers” can cause the government to delve into our lives more, giving the government even more control. Some of his criticisms are valid, but so are some of his recommendations included in the book.

Reference

Lazare, Daniel. The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution Is Paralyzing Democracy .

New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996.