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## **Elections and Accountability: Why the Republic Is a Stronger Form of Government Than the Monarchy**

In a debate over the merits of different forms of government, the republic triumphs over the monarchy. Monarchy was the default form of government for centuries. It exists today in two forms: absolute and constitutional. An absolute monarchy exists when the monarch wields absolute power over their subjects. In a constitutional monarchy the sovereign serves a more ceremonial role, ceding most real power to a separate governing body. In a republic, “supreme power resides in a body of citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by elected officers and representatives responsible to them” (“Republic”). Both forms of government have merits, but republics are superior because they allow citizens a direct role in governance, are less extravagant, and contain safeguards against corruption.

If we understand republics as government by the people, then we must understand that a monarchy is the opposite. In a monarchy the people are ruled by one sovereign, a king or queen. This position is hereditary, traditionally following a pattern of patriarchal primogeniture – meaning that the first-born son will always inherit the throne. Those in charge do not need to prove they deserve to be in charge; they simply must be born into the right family. In contrast, republics require that government officials be elected to their post by the people, usually after lengthy campaigns during which candidates publicly make the case of their fitness for the role. These elected officials are often viewed as more legitimate than hereditary rulers who do not need to prove they are capable of the job.

Both forms of government must contend with the eventuality of unstable people coming into power. History has no dearth of insane monarchs, men who were unfit to rule due to mental instability, behavioral incompatibility, or just a lack of interest in ruling. In a republic such as the United States, there is a separation of powers under which each branch of government has a clearly

defined job, “The intent is to prevent the concentration of power and provide for checks and balances” (“Separation of Powers”). This should, theoretically, prevent any lasting damage to the country if an unqualified person is elected. There are also impeachment proceedings and recall elections designed to remove unfit individuals from office early, should the need arise. In a monarchy, the people are stuck with this unstable ruler until they either abdicate or die.

Monarchies must contend with the public’s perception of extravagant spending in a way that republics do not. Take the British monarchy for example, according to *The Sovereign Grant and Sovereign Grant Reserve: Annual Report and Accounts 2016-17*, “The Sovereign Grant for 2017-18 is £76.1 million” (*The Sovereign Grant 2*). This means the British royal family will receive, from taxpayers, £76.1 million to finance their official duties and the upkeep costs on royal properties used for official business. Taxpayers can become agitated when they see their monarchs costing so much money, especially during an economic downturn. In a republic, taxpayers are responsible for the upkeep costs of government buildings and the wages of government workers, but those can be cut more easily in times of economic hardship.

Proponents of monarchy may argue that monarchies provide clarity. The people always know who will rule when the current monarch dies. The future monarch is also usually well-prepared for their position, having been educated and trained to take on the role since birth, which is not the case in a republic. After all, monarchical supporters will argue that, “modern history provides ample illustration of the economic and ethical shortcomings of *all* states, whether monarchic or democratic” (Hoppe xxi). The eventuality of a monarch unfit to rule is, in their eyes, no reason to dissolve a monarchy because that same potential exists in the republic system.

The main difference between a republic and a monarchy is that in a republic the people have a greater say in who governs them. If leaders fail to live up to what is expected of them, there is a built-in system for removing those leaders from power. Government officials in a republic do still have to contend with questions regarding government spending, but they are not obligated to keep up spending

on items that they simply cannot afford. Overall, a republic form of government is stronger because of the direct involvement of the people whom it governs.

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