Constitutional Amendment Proposal Assignment

Overview:

In this assignment you will be asked to demonstrate your understanding of the U.S. Constitution’s intricacies, and the ways in which we can modify that document, by proposing an amendment to the United States Constitution. This proposal could cover any content, but you will be required to justify your proposal in a variety of ways. Historically there have been thousands of proposed amendments, some very close to being passed, others less so. They include proposals to require that the budget be balanced, that women are guaranteed equal treatment under the law, that the electoral college be abolished, and more.

Requirements:  
 This assignment is made up of two distinct parts. First you will create a written proposal for your amendment. This will include the exact text of the amendment that you would like to propose, as well as a multi-paragraph justification explaining why Congress should vote to pass your proposal. Secondly you will engage in a mock Senate with your classmates, proposing and voting on Constitutional amendments. For more detail on these requirements refer to the accompanying rubrics.

* **Part One: Written Proposal**
  + This written proposal should be broken into sections, which have been identified below. Sections should have section headers.
  + The first step to this assignment is to identify a thing you would like to create an amendment for. This could be a social, political, or economic issue, but should be something that you believe that the federal government should intervene in.
  + After identifying your topic you will need to write out the wording of your proposed amendment. This will be the first section of your written proposal. It does not need to contain any information besides the exact wording of the amendment, but this amendment should be structured in a similar way to existing amendments (see Bill of Rights for reference).
  + The second section of your proposal will be an explanation of how your proposed amendment solves a pressing issue either in society or within the Constitution. This section gives you a space to justify why you think your proposed amendment is important, and in what way you think it solves a serious problem. This section should demonstrate to the reader that the proposal is worthy of joining the very exclusive number of amendments to the current constitution.
  + The third section of your proposal will be an explanation of whether Federalists, Anti-Federalists, neither, or both would support your proposed amendment. You should base your evidence off the readings on the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers, as well as lecture information. Specific references to works are beneficial here. You should demonstrate a thorough understanding of what each side supports, and how it could apply to your issue in the modern era.
  + The fourth section of your proposal will explain in what way your proposal would be supported by either Locke, Hobbes, or Montesquieu. In this section you should demonstrate an understanding of the political philosophers works, and explain how any one of those philosopher’s works is relevant to your proposal.
    - For example, if you wanted to argue that all individuals ought to be given taco’s for free every Tuesday you might argue that Locke would support this as an extension of his natural rights theory.
* **Part Two: Mock Senate**
  + Your grade in this section will be a synthesis of three things. They are:
    - 1) Your proposal speech. This is a one to one-and-a-half minute prepared speech in which you explain your proposed amendment, and attempt to justify why you think your fellow Senators should vote for it.
    - 2) Your response to another Senator's proposal in a 20-40 second rebuttal.
    - 3) Your overall demeanor and behaviour during the proceedings, as well as your ability to follow Robert’s Rules of Order.