



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

PROMOTION OF THE GENERAL WELFARE MAY PREVENT DIMINISHED HEALTH AND DISABILITY

The constitutional values of “general welfare” is related to the public’s health

A paper was part of a Brookings Institution forum on “How We’re Doing, A Composite Index of Global and National Trends” that tracked U.S. policies associated with constitutional concepts over six presidents. Panel members at the forum were Brookings senior fellows on economics, community development, education and a journalist

Summary

There was an examination of the constructs of “common defense” and “promotion of “general welfare” of the Constitution that were tracked over six presidents in a document presented at the forum. Under “general welfare”, cohorts of the paper were economic indicators and employment conditions. These constructs that were: 1) real GDP growth, 2) unemployment rates, 3) consumer confidence, 4) inflation, 5) interest rates on fixed mortgages, 6) public debt, 7) oil imports, and 8) employment declines in large metropolitan areas. Under “common defense”, military conditions and population based health risk factors of poverty and environmental conditions were cited. “Common defense” cohorts were 1) the U.S. defense budget, 2) number of military troops stationed abroad 3) U.S. military fatalities, 4) number of nations that have tested nuclear weapons, 5) armed conflicts world wide 6) civilian casualties due to armed conflicts world wide, 7) size of world population, 8) share of global population living under \$1 a day, 9) and greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere..

Disability Prevention Issue

There were no measures of protecting life under the common welfare of the document.

Comparative prevalence among countries on population-based morbidity and mortality measures associated with protection of “common welfare” are grim. A recent report indicated the U.S. as 46th on life expectancy in the world, 42nd in infant mortality and 37th in quality of life years when compared to other countries. Thus, the report suggests that conditions in the U.S. related to social determinants of health and associated with morbidity and mortality should be considered as part of “promoting the general welfare”. Socially valid constructs subsumed under “promote the general welfare” are relevant to formulation of policies that benefit the American public which includes prevention of diminished population based health and disability

Activity

A letter was written to the author of the paper to comment on the validity of events associated with the American Constitutions mandate that the government provide for the “common defense” and “promote general welfare” of the people

Principle

The social validity of constitutional values of “general welfare” and “common defense” should be reevaluated within the context of the public’s health