

The Devil in Devolution

1. What makes the trend toward devolution a “pause in an endless American argument over the balance between nation and state?”
2. Why does Donahue suggest that devolution does not make sense at this time?
3. What do “interlinked computers” have to do with the wisdom of devolution? Is it possible that this argument cuts both ways?
4. What is meant by “the tragedy of the commons?”
5. What assumption seems to underlie Donahue’s contention that “the fragmentation of authority makes success less likely?”
6. What would be the likely result of a decision to nationalize the presidential primary timetable? How does Donahue think that this would be preferable to the present system?
7. [Note: Donahue is just plain wrong about the effect of the “full faith and credit” clause of the Constitution. The courts have long recognized a public policy exception. Obviously, though, it’s an error shared by many. The fact that it’s an error is what caused President Clinton – a lawyer after all – to lament the partisan advantage taking that prompted the Defense of Marriage Act.]
8. What principle of power sharing does Donahue say logically should be used in environmental protection?
9. Donahue’s gambling argument seems to be that state competition for gambling dollars forces state governments to give citizens what they want. Does this make any sense?
10. What are the “two basic strategies for overcoming the confusion of incentives that trigger the tragedy of the commons?”