



FOREWORD

In today's age of electronic media and twenty-four-hour news coverage, we witness countless images of our democracy in action. They come in such a flurry that we barely have time to consider individual scenes. It wasn't always so. Not until the 19th century did printmaking techniques allow for the wide and relatively rapid dissemination of newsworthy pictures. These prints were created by sending an artist to an event to make a sketch, which was then transferred to metal, stone, or wood and printed in one of the great weekly news magazines of the day, such as *Harper's Weekly* or *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.

A skilled artist will always attempt to convey more than the mere depiction of a scene. The artists sent by *Harper's* and *Leslie's* to record events carefully crafted their sketches to communicate a sense of drama and immediacy to an audience that was removed from the scene by a thousand miles' distance and a week's time. No less important are the social and political contexts within which these artists worked. As works of art, these engravings portray more than just the cold facts: they are visual expressions of Americans' feelings toward the nation, its politicians, and our democracy. As such, they are worthy of careful study.

It would benefit us as Americans to reflect on the themes expressed in these pages. The prints serve as fitting reminders of the trials and crises faced by our forebears, and they teach us the resilience of our nation and our unique system of government. Although more than a century separates us from the images depicted here, the sense of pride in the greatness of our nation and in the institutions of our democracy is just as compelling today. It is our hope that these prints will inspire readers with that same national pride. ❧

The Honorable William H. Frist, M.D.
Majority Leader, United States Senate
Chairman, U.S. Senate Commission on Art

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader, United States Senate
Vice Chairman, U.S. Senate Commission on Art