

Thomas Jefferson's observations on grass roots democracy and local government:

I have indeed two great measures at heart, without which no republic can maintain itself in strength.

1. That of general education, to enable every man to judge for himself what will secure or endanger his freedom.
2. To divide every county into hundreds, of such size that all the children of each will be within a central school in it... These little republics would be the main strength of the great one. We owe to them the vigor given to our revolution in its commencement in the Eastern States.



It is not by the consolidation, or concentration of powers, but by their distribution, that good government is effected. Were not this great country already divided into states, that division must be made, that each might do for itself what concerns itself directly, and what it can so much better do than distant authority. Every state again is divided into counties, each to take care of what lies within its local bounds; each county again into townships or wards, to manage minuter details; and every ward into farms, to be governed each by its individual proprietor. Were we directed from Washington when to sow, & when to reap, we should soon want bread. It is by this partition of cares, descending in gradation from general to particular, that the mass of human affairs may be best managed for the good and prosperity of all.

