

State of the union

When the federal system works democratically, it delivers median results.

There are winners and losers, but the broad middle is satisfied.

Under such federalism, if Congress were to take up abortion rights, for example, some states would want to ban the procedure entirely and others to allow it far into the term of pregnancy.

A bill that ultimately reaches the president's desk for signature might ban it after twelve weeks or twenty-four.

In the current political environment, such a broad national acceptance of compromise is improbable.

**Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson,
New York Review of Books, September 22, 2022**