

Republic (Cicero; excerpt)

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(Excerpt)

By Cicero

54-51 B.C.

[Cicero. *De Republica*. Translated by Thomas L. Pangle. Princeton, N.J.: The Witherspoon Institute. 2011. Book 3, section 33.]

Laelius the Stoic speaking:

True law is right reason congruent with nature, diffused in all, constant, sempiternal, which calls with commandments to duty and deters with prohibitions from wrongdoing; it is not ineffective in its commands and prohibitions to men of probity, but it does not move men without probity by its commands and prohibitions. It is not permitted either to try to alter this law or to derogate from it, and it is not possible to abrogate it. We cannot be freed from this law by senate or populace, and we need not seek anyone else to explain or interpret it; and there will not be a different law of Rome, a different law of Athens, or different laws now and different laws in time to come, but for all nations and all times one sempiternal and immutable law, and one god who is like a teacher and emperor for all in common, who is of this law the maker, promulgator and judge. He who disobeys flees himself, and, denying human nature, suffers thereby the worst punishments, even if he escapes what are supposed to be the other penalties . . .

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