

Abstract Submitted
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40 Years of Metrication in the US DAVID BARTLETT, University of Colorado at Boulder — In July 1971, Maurice Stans, the Secretary of Commerce, presented the proposal of the National Institute of Standards and Technology for “A Metric America.” Envisioned was a ten-year plan which would, with some compulsion, establish SI as the dominant language for commerce, education, and science in the US. The Metric Conversion Act of 1975 was, however, voluntary. Evidently, the machinists’ union demanded \$1000 per man to replace tools. The rallying cry was “Two, Four, Six, Eight, We Ain’t Going to Metricate – and we’ll come over your head with a 9/16th if you force us.” The government obliged with an evolving set of guidelines. Today the U.S. Metric Association is gloomy; the Dozenal Society of America is happy. I will argue that the evolution of Metric in the US is a triumph for democracy, not ignorance.

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