

How to Take Back Your Constitution

*Regaining Limited Federal Government
By Holding Local Politicians Accountable*

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Introduction

Would you like to see a limited federal government bound by the chains of the Constitution? Would you like to see politicians upholding their oath to the Constitution? It is possible to see these two principles of good government instituted. It all starts at the local level by confronting the politicians who live in your neighborhood. This essay points the way but it is up to "We the People", i.e., you to make it happen.

Holding local politicians accountable to their oath to the Constitution

We all know that Congress and the President consistently violate their oath to "uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States." But did you know that every local politician, mayor, city or village council representative, township trustee, county commissioner, etc., also takes an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the constitution of their state?

As a City Councilman in the Columbus suburb of Gahanna, OH, (<http://gahanna.gov>) I decided that I would uphold that oath by voting NO on certain city ordinances funded by unconstitutional federal money. Before a city can spend money Council has to vote on a city ordinance authorizing the expenditure. In order to uphold my oath I have had to vote NO on buying three police cruisers with "drug money" taken in a drug raid. Why? Because the "war on drugs" is a totally unconstitutional policy.

I had to vote NO on a "safe sidewalks to schools" grant. Why? Because there is no authority in the Constitution's Article I, sec 8, the enumerated powers of Congress, which grants the federal government the right to give money to cities. All one has to do is look each month at how many money spending ordinances are being voted on by local politicians and see which ordinances violate Article I, section 8.

Why are these local politicians violating their oath? It's because the average citizen is not calling them on it. What if two, then ten, then 20, then 40, etc, people started showing up at their local government meetings and started monitoring the unconstitutional votes of their local politicians? What if these citizens started voicing their opposition to these votes during the council's "hearing of visitors" part of the meeting? What if these people started becoming as outraged over their local politicians dishonoring their oath to the constitution as NIMBY's become outraged over a zoning issue?

If "we the people" are ever going to have a Constitution that has any teeth in it, then "we the people" will have to give it meaning by acting at the local level and confronting local politicians who violate their oath. When the next local election comes up, the Constitution can be made the issue by making it known how many times an incumbent violated his or her oath.

A simple action plan

Just ask your neighbor if he or she thinks it's right for their local politician to violate their oath to the Constitution. If your neighbor says, "No it's not right", you've got a chance to make a convert out of him or her and explain the original meaning of Article I, section 8. So now you've got two people monitoring the local votes. Two can become four in the same manner and four can become eight, etc.

Wouldn't it be nice if during "hearing of visitors" people came to their local government meetings and started publicly asking their local politicians if they were going to violate their oath by voting for an unconstitutional ordinance?

This is a movement that requires no national organization or money-raising. It is a movement that could "go viral" with emails, youtubes, blogs, etc. Every American respects the U.S. Constitution, but most have not read Article I, section 8 and do not realize that it is the part of the Constitution which places limited powers on Congress.

Article I, section 8

Known as the "enumerated powers" of Congress, this part of the Constitution is the "rule book" which Congress is supposed to live by. There are only about 25 powers granted by the Constitution to the Federal Congress. This section of the Constitution limits the power of Congress. The Declaration of Independence says people are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" and "that to secure these rights, governments are instituted." It's important for everyone to read Article I, section 8 because when Congress violates this part of the Constitution they violate our freedom rather than securing it.

The Davy Crockett Example

We must all take a stance like one of Davy Crockett's constituents who confronted Crockett for voting federal monies for charity to help people burned out of their homes. When Crockett sought re-election the constituent called Crockett on the carpet for violating the Constitution by saying, "The people have delegated to Congress, by the Constitution, the power to do certain things. To do these, it is authorized to collect and pay moneys, and for nothing else. Everything beyond this is usurpation, and a violation of the Constitution."

<http://www.lewrockwell.com/orig4/ellis1.html>

When scores, then thousands then tens of thousands, then one million people start confronting their local politicians in the same manner that Crockett was confronted, the U.S. Constitution will once again take its place as a means to limit the Federal Government and keep it within the bounds of constitutional authority.

How does one monitor the votes of their local politicians?

Every political body has an agenda that is printed up ahead of the political body's meeting. The agenda is a public document. Most cities discuss the upcoming ordinances every other week in committee meetings. These meetings are also open to the public. It is decided during these committee meetings if the spending requests by the administration are put on the "Consent Agenda" or whether the ordinance is put on the "Regular Agenda" to be voted on as a separate item.

Many times the ordinances, which are being funded by federal money, are put on the Consent Agenda. There's no discussion and these ordinances are voted on as a routine item like buying rock salt. Thus, the council members have violated their oath to uphold the Constitution because Article I, section 8 does not authorize Congress to give money to local governments.

Where do Congress members come from?

If you check the background of your local member of the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate you will find that most of these people started out in politics as a city council representative, county commissioner, etc. Many went on to their state legislatures. What if we were only sending people to higher office who had proved their worthiness of upholding the Constitution at the local level? Might we then start to get state legislatures and a U.S. Congress made up of people who honor freedom and the founding principles of limited government and a government that secures our rights rather than tramples on them?

Freedom

The Constitution is about protecting freedom by limiting the power of a central federal government. Do you love freedom? Every time the federal government takes money from you through taxation and distributes it to others or spends it in a way it sees fit, you lose more of your freedom.

Alexis de Tocqueville said, “The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public's money.” These bribes come right down to the local level in the form of “federal spending programs.” It’s time to stop taking the bribes and start holding local politicians accountable to the oath they swore to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

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