

As I interact with local elected officials, one of the most common objections they have to the concept of a Constitutional Resolution is this: "We already take an oath to the Constitution. Thus, it is redundant to pass a Constitutional Resolution. It's not necessary." Here is my response to this objection....

From that day in 1776 when our Founding Fathers placed pen to paper and signed their names to the Declaration of Independence, ours has been a history of the blossoming of freedom. With the adoption of the Constitution of the United States in 1789, the ideals of liberty endowed by the Creator and the philosophy of the natural rights of man were codified. These ideals, perfectly expressed and imperfectly implemented in 1789, advanced. With the passage of time and the efforts of great men and women, more and more people experienced the benefits of a free society. These ideals propelled our nation into the bloody conflict of Civil War for the purpose of setting men free. These ideals spurred our nation onward toward enfranchisement and equality for more and more men and women. The green grass and blue skies of liberty have benefited the citizens of America for centuries. Throughout the history of the United States, the government was restrained within the boundaries instituted and enumerated by the Constitution. The source of governmental power was understood by all to be the people and the role of the government was understood by all to be that of protector of liberties.

We still have our Founding Documents. Our elected officials still take an oath to the Constitution. But something has changed. The government that historically existed to secure the liberties of the people now grants (or withholds) permissions to people. The government that historically existed because of the consent of the governed, now exists to regulate the people. The government that historically respected the restraints placed upon it by the Constitution now limits not itself, but the people. Elected officials may still take an oath to the Constitution, but most of them are unable to name the freedoms expressed in the Bill of Rights or discuss with clarity all of the 27 amendments or the Articles that enumerate the limited powers of government. In other words, we pay lip-service to the Constitution without truly respecting its profound impact.

Even though our Founding Documents still exist and despite the fact that elected officials swear or sign an oath to the Constitution, our liberties are slipping away. Local control is slipping away. The autonomy of both the individual and the local elected governing body is taking its last gasp. The power that the Constitution guarantees remains in the hands of the people is being centralized. Washington, Albany, and bureaucracies have the power to crush individual citizens and local elected officials.

We the People are losing our autonomy. When we interact with the government, it is now for the purpose of asking the government to extend a scepter of permission. We tremble before the government, aware that it can destroy our lives. But it is not just We the People losing our autonomy and trembling. It is you, too, the local elected official. You now exist to do the bidding of Albany or Washington or bureaucrats. You now exist as mere administrative arms of centralized government. You who know best the unique flavor of our local communities, our needs, and our strengths, are subjugated – as are we - to a position of servitude to the State.

For this reason, we believe it is good and necessary to make a statement in which we affirm that we remember and treasure the Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights. We believe that such an expression, while symbolic, is profoundly meaningful. We have inherited the great jewel of liberty. But we see the sparkle of the jewel becoming dull and distant. The jewel must be

polished by a simple, straightforward expression of the ideals we hold dear. Such an expression made in a Constitutional Resolution is both worthy and essential.

Is it redundant to pass a Constitutional resolution? It would only be redundant if the Constitution still guided the day-to-day operations and decisions of our government. It would only be redundant if the Constitution still framed the way we think about government and citizens. It would only be redundant if we were already assured it would be the legacy passed down to our children and grandchildren. The honest citizen and the honest elected official know that it no longer occupies such a place of high esteem. We have grown forgetful. We have neglected our heritage. Thus, not only is it not redundant to lift high the banner of liberty expressed beautifully in the Constitution, but it is also essential.