

Today, September 17, marks the 223rd anniversary of the formal signing of the United States Constitution. Our Constitution has not only served as the foundation of our nation, but also as a symbol of freedom and democracy worldwide. Perhaps most well known, it ensured that power would be granted by the consent of the American people rather than by bloodline or an all-powerful dictator, and created three branches of the federal government so that powers would be separated and balanced. It was a bold and innovative document that has stood the test of time and has gained tremendous admiration around the world.

On this anniversary, however, I am concerned that too many in Washington have forgotten one of its bedrock principles: federalism. This concept says that the federal, state, and local governments have their own areas of authority which should not be impeded on by each other. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution spells out the specific powers granted to Congress and was designed to ensure that the federal government has certain limited, enumerated powers. Additionally, James Madison added a set of explicit rights to the Constitution to secure the support of several founders who wanted even greater assurances that federal power would be limited and state and individual rights protected. The result was the Bill of Rights, which included the Tenth Amendment: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." The founders unmistakably envisioned a federal government with clear boundaries. I am a member of the [10th Amendment Task Force](#), a group of House members committed to upholding the principles of federalism.

Unfortunately, many in Congress continually act with disregard to the Constitution. In particular, I believe Congress has taken actions that exceed the limited powers it was given in Article I, Section 8 and violate the Tenth Amendment. The recent government takeover of healthcare is a prime example of this usurpation of power. The new legislation includes a mandate which requires every American to have a healthcare plan. The authority required to issue such a mandate is not present in the Constitution. Since this power is not expressed in the Constitution it is left to the States respectively and in no way should be an issue taken up by the federal government. Congressional and Presidential whim must not be allowed to dictate the future of our country.

To honor, celebrate, and protect the Constitution on the 223rd anniversary of its signing, I have joined with 57 House members in cosponsoring a resolution to commemorate the occasion. On September 17, 2010 we will ask Congress to pass this resolution which strives "to preserve and strengthen the values and rights bestowed by the Constitution upon the United States and its citizens."

The founding fathers intended the Constitution to be a roadmap for generations to come. It has been the foundation of a nation whose ideals of freedom and democracy that has lit the world for over two centuries. In taking this office, I swear an oath to defend the Constitution and I will always fervently defend and uphold the document that has guided our nation so well.