



Reading the Constitution

But President Obama was wise enough to lower the liberal rhetoric by his moving speech at the Memorial Service in Tucson. He gained many points for himself by speaking about the victims, their lives, the acts of courage and heroism, the loss of precious people, and the need for us to become better Americans. The unintended implication is that we need to improve ourselves so that our society will produce fewer madmen shooting up innocent citizens.



Of course, there will always be madmen, and law enforcement agencies can't protect us from them until after they commit their crimes. That is why we need an armed citizenry, to do the work of prevention that the government can't do. The devil is not a madman. Satan is not insane. That is why evil is so difficult to control.

Yet there were positive signs coming from Washington when the incoming dominant Republicans opened the new session on January 5 by a historic reading of the United States Constitution on the floor of the House and put forth a new Rule requiring all bills to cite their constitutional authority before being considered for enactment. It was important for Congress to be reminded that our form of government, our elections, our legislative processes are all based on the Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land.

Incidentally, it was Representative Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona who, beginning her third term in Congress, read the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the Right of the People peaceably to assemble, and to Petition the Government for Redress of Grievances."

In this regard, Bob Schulz of the We the People Foundation comments:

In 2008, American citizens who acted on their First Amendment Right to Petition for Redress of Grievances, twice served Giffords, and the 534 other members of Congress, lawful Petitions concerning violations of the Constitution, in an effort to try to stop the devastating impacts on America. On constitutional grounds, these Petitions for Redress sought answers to legitimate, well-researched questions regarding the Federal Reserve; tax on labor; Iraq Resolution; Patriot Act; failure of Presidents to enforce the immigration laws; federal gun control laws; and the steps being taken toward a North American Union. The Petitions were not seeking the impossible. As you are aware, the Petitions were ignored.

The We the People Foundation also quotes Daniel Webster on its site, who once said:

Hold on, my friends, to the Constitution and the Republic for which it stands. Miracles do not cluster, and what has happened once in 6,000 years, may not happen again. Hold on to the Constitution, for if the American Constitution should fail, there will be anarchy throughout the



world.

It is expected that the new House of Representatives will show greater respect for the constitutional rights of American citizens. However, liberal columnists mocked the idea of reading the Constitution on the floor of the House. The *Washington Post's* Ezra Klein called the reading a "gimmick" and said that the text was confusing "because it was written more than 100 years ago." E. J. Dionne of the *Post* accused the Tea Partiers of treating the Constitution as if it were "the equivalent of sacred scripture." Representative Jerrold Nadler, a New York Democrat, echoed Dionne's assessment. He condemned the "ritualistic reading" as "total nonsense" and "propaganda." The Founders were not "demigods," Nadler added, calling the Constitution "highly imperfect."

"You are not supposed to worship your constitution. You are supposed to govern your government by it," he said.

So why is reading the Constitution aloud in Congress a form of worship? It was done simply to remind congressmen such as Nadler that the Constitution is the source of their legislative and elective power, and that they are obliged to adhere to its principles and tenets.

The new House of Representatives got off to a good start. It is now up to us who voted for the conservatives to monitor closely what goes in the "people's House" and to maintain that patriotic spirit which made the reading of the Constitution a great historic event in our lives.



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