



House Votes to Proceed with Lawsuit Against Obama

Earlier this week, the House of Representatives paved the way for a lawsuit against President Obama for his abuse of power. In June, House Speaker John Boehner (shown, R-Ohio) accused the president of not faithfully executing the laws of the United States and announced plans to file suit. On July 30, House Republicans voted to proceed with that lawsuit.



The *Washington Post* reports, “The nearly party-line vote — all Democrats voted against it, and all but five Republicans voted for it — further agitated an already polarized climate on Capitol Hill as both parties used the pending suit to try to rally support ahead of the November elections.”

Despite accusations by Democrats that the move is merely a political stunt, Boehner asserts that the purpose of the suit is to restore the authority of the Constitution. “The Constitution makes it clear that a president’s job is to faithfully execute the laws. In my view, the president has not faithfully executed the laws,” the Ohio Republican said.

In his June memo to House Republicans, Boehner outlined the foundation for his decision to pursue the lawsuit:

On one matter after another during his presidency, President Obama has circumvented the Congress through executive action, creating his own laws and excusing himself from executing statutes he is sworn to enforce — at times even boasting about his willingness to do it, as if daring the American people to stop him. On matters ranging from health care and energy to foreign policy and education, President Obama has repeatedly run an end-around on the American people and their elected legislators, straining the boundaries of the solemn oath he took on Inauguration Day.

In public, President Obama has appeared unconcerned about the impending lawsuit. “They’re going to sue me for taking executive actions to help people. So they’re mad I’m doing my job,” Obama said in an economics speech in Kansas City, Missouri. “And by the way, I’ve told them I’d be happy to do it with you. The only reason I’m doing it on my own is because you’re not doing anything,” he said of Congress. “Stop being mad all the time. Stop just hatin’ all the time,” Obama added. “Everyone sees this as a political stunt.”

Democrats continue to link the lawsuit to calls for impeachment. As Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-N.Y.) remarked, “This lawsuit is the drumbeat pushing members of the Republican Party to impeachment.”

But Boehner and House Republicans say it’s not so. “This is not about impeachment — it’s about him faithfully executing the laws of this county,” Boehner said. “My view is the president has not faithfully executed the laws. What we have seen clearly over the last five years is an effort to erode the power of the Legislative Branch.”



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on August 1, 2014

While this is not the first time that members of Congress have filed lawsuits or briefs in support of suits against presidents, this particular case is different because of the recent vote. The *Washington Post* writes, “The novel idea for Thursday’s vote was driven by a clutch of conservative legal scholars who contend that the best way for Republicans to have legal standing in federal court is if the entire body passes legislation authorizing it.”

If the courts in fact do decide to take up the suit, it is not likely that a conclusion would be reached during Obama’s presidency. Still, a decision in the case could help to restore the balance between the executive and legislative branches.

Photo of House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio): AP Images



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