



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on June 29, 2025

Rand Paul Votes With Democrats to Limit Trump's War Powers

Only one Republican in the Senate voted to rein in the president's power to wage war. Senator Rand Paul of Kentucky voted on Friday with Democrats for the War Powers Resolution, which would've required debate and a congressional vote before the president could take military action against Iran.

The resolution, authored in the Senate by Virginia Democrat Tim Kaine, ultimately failed 47-53, along mostly party lines. Although it took place after President Donald Trump authorized the June 21 strikes against Iran, the idea was to limit similar actions in the future.



AP Images
Rand Paul

While Paul dissented from his party, Pennsylvania Democrat John Fetterman broke with his and voted against the resolution. He said of his decision: "I'm going to vote no on that because I would never want to restrict any future president, Republican or Democrat, to do this kind of military exercise."

Paul's Justification

Before the vote, Paul stood on the Senate floor to remind everyone in attendance that Congress — and only Congress — has the authority to declare war. He spoke for eight minutes, during which he cited multiple Founding Fathers who believed that something as consequential as military action must be decided by the people's representatives, not the president. The father of the Constitution, James Madison, Paul reminded everyone, said that:

the executive branch was the branch most prone to war. Therefore the Constitution with studied care vested that power in the legislature. ... In no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war and peace to the legislature and not to the executive branch.

He then referenced another Founding Father, Alexander Hamilton, who penned a number of essays in *The Federalist Papers* (aka [The Federalist](#)). According to Hamilton:

The legislature can alone declare war, can alone transfer the nation from a state of peace to a state of war. ... If the legislature has a right to make war on the one hand, it is on the other hand the duty of the executive to preserve peace.

Paul noted that although Madison and Hamilton had some differing views on executive powers, they agreed that declaring war is a decision that only Congress should make.



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The Kentucky senator also mentioned George Washington's take on this issue:

The Constitution vests the power of declaring war with Congress. Therefore no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they shall have deliberated upon the subject and authorized such a measure.

"No offensive expedition without congressional approval," Paul summarized, emphasizing the central point.

He then rattled off a list of recent U.S. military expeditions that commenced without congressional approval, and their resulting consequences:

Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, and now Iran. All countries in the region that the U.S. has bombed or is bombing. In each case, the hawks in Washington were adamant that the U.S. military intervention would lead to a glorious future and a great peace. Instead, after tragically losing thousands of lives and trillions of dollars, the U.S. is not in a better strategic position, thanks to our interventions.

Paul also brought up the foolishness of stationing tens of thousands of American soldiers in the Middle East, where they serve as sitting ducks. If Americans are injured or killed, the warmongers in Washington will be calling for war, he said.

The War Powers Resolution that was debated Friday, Paul said, is in reference to the Vietnam War debacle. The aim is for the president to never again catapult the country into war without the people's permission. He concluded by saying the vote they were about to take provided an opportunity to "stand up for the constitution."

Most U.S. senators decided to not do so.

The Constitution is clear – Congress, not the President, has the power to declare war. [@SenTimKaine](#)'s resolution offers every member of Congress an opportunity to stand up for the Constitution, American service members, and America's strategic interests. pic.twitter.com/WNA7ocxCen

— Senator Rand Paul (@SenRandPaul) [June 27, 2025](#)

Constitutional Congressmen

Paul is among the most constitutionally obedient U.S. senators and overall federal legislators. He's earned a 96-percent [lifetime score](#) in *The New American's* Freedom Index, an honor only a handful of federal lawmakers can brag about.

TNA publishes the Freedom Index regularly and offers free access to it in order to help citizens determine which legislators obey the Constitution and which don't. Congress is the key to restoring the United States to a constitutional Republic that adheres to the supreme law of the land, the U.S. Constitution. Citizens all across the country utilize the Freedom Index. You can access it [here](#).

The House of Representatives' version of the War Powers Resolution, co-authored by another constitutionally obedient lawmaker from Kentucky, [Thomas Massie](#), didn't even get a vote.



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Unconstitutional Congressman

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.), who practiced Constitutional law for many years, has defended the president's offensive action against Iran as Constitutional. He said on the House floor last Tuesday:

The strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities were clearly within President Trump's Article II powers as commander-in-chief. It shouldn't even be in dispute. Allow me to put my Constitutional Law hat on for a moment because that's what I used to do. ... The framers of our Constitution never intended for the president to seek the approval of Congress every time he exercises his constitutional authority under Article II as commander-in-chief.

Johnson bolstered his interpretation of the Constitution by quoting a Founding Father Paul had cited to argue the opposite view. Johnson said:

Alexander Hamilton argued in *Federalist*, No. 70, just for one example, that "energy in the executive is a leading character in the definition of good government. It is essential to the protection of the community against foreign attacks."

The speaker then reiterated the most common defense for why the president can single-handedly make the decision to take war actions against other countries. He said the framers knew that Congress would deliberate and therefore take their time. "And in an emergent and imminent situation, time is not something we always have the luxury of," he added. He concluded that in such moments of danger, the Founders wanted "one single hand of authority" to "act decisively and effectively."

Mike Johnson argues President Trump didn't need Congress' approval to attack Iran:

"The framers of our Constitution never intended for the president to seek the approval of Congress every time he exercises his constitutional authority under Article 2."

pic.twitter.com/WYfqHKfx3I

— The Recount (@therecount) [June 24, 2025](#)

Imminent Danger to America?

The notion that Iran posed imminent danger to the United States rests on shaky ground. David Stockman, formerly the budget director under President Ronald Reagan, recently penned a scathing rebuke of this idea. In a post republished on Ron Paul's website, titled "[America First — We Hardly Knew Ye](#)," Stockman pointed out that Iran has no navy — no aircraft carriers, no world-scale cruisers, no destroyers, and no attack submarines. It also doesn't have any bombers with a range of more than 2,800 kilometers. And although it has as many as 2,700 short- and medium-range missiles, they can't cover the 10,000 kilometers needed to reach coastal Washington, D.C. "The only thing Iran can really threaten is a limited number of US bases, military personnel and naval ships that Washington has foolishly put in harm's way in the middle east, Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Mediterranean," Stockman added.

Nevertheless, on June 21 Trump unilaterally made the decision to bomb Iran. American stealth bombers flew to Iran and dropped 14 bunker-busting bombs on three of Iran's nuclear facilities. Fortunately, no



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Americans were harmed or killed, and a ceasefire was soon after agreed on.



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