



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 5, 2016

Article I Project Aims to Restore Balance Between Congress, White House

Following the three-day National Lawyers Convention in Washington in November sponsored by the Federalist Society, [the Article I Project was announced](#). Designed to restore the balance of powers provided for by the Founders in Article I of the U.S. Constitution, the project was picked up quickly by Representatives Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Jeb Hensarling (R-Texas).



The project is necessary, according to the Federalist Society, because “the current Congress has largely failed to ... accomplish the mandate they received in the last three elections.... [Congress] has completely abandoned the power of the purse, and [has] failed to assert its authority to check the Executive [branch] when the President has tried unilaterally to change the law by selective enforcement and executive decree.” If the project is successful, “Congress can once again function as it was designed in our Constitution.”

According to Article I, Section 7, “All bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives,” a power that increasingly has been passed on to the executive branch through a process of usurpation, neglect, and default. As a result, said Hensarling in announcing his support of the project on Wednesday, government has become “a leviathan that has metastasized into the nation’s largest creditor, debtor, and lender; its largest employer, property owner and tenant; its largest insurer, health care provider and pension underwriter.”

Lee amplified the goals of the Article I Project: “First, reclaiming Congress’ power of the purse; second, reforming legislative cliffs; third, reasserting congressional authority over regulations and regulators; and finally curbing executive discretion.”

Omnibus spending bills would be history, added Senator Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), another sponsor of the project: “The best way will be if our leaders can get the appropriations process back on track. When we pass appropriations measures one by one, that allows us to go in and actually have some kind of leverage.”

Though still in its infancy, the project is having some initial success. Ten legislators have already indicated their support for it, along with the tacit support of House Speaker Paul Ryan, who has promised to return to “regular order” on appropriations and offer separate spending bills instead of a single bill lumping them all together. In the Senate, Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) has agreed



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not to block Ryan's new procedure.

On Thursday, both Senators Lee and Hensarling called in to *The Glenn Beck Program* to promote the project. Explained Lee:

We formed the Article 1 Project for the purpose of reinvigorating Congress' power. Congress over the last 80 years has gradually delegated away almost all of its legislative power, to the point now where upwards of 95 percent of our laws are now made by executive branch bureaucrats.

And as hard-working and well-intentioned and well-educated and highly specialized as these people might be, they don't work for us. We can't fire them. They're not elected. They're not even accountable to anyone who is elected.

So we're trying to turn that around. We're trying to put the power back into the hands of people, specifically back in the hands of the people's elected representatives.

When Beck quizzed the duo on how Congress has abdicated its responsibility over the years to the executive branch, Hensarling responded:

A lot of this has been self-enfeeblement by a number of Congresses. This has been going on for decades. I'm reminded of Madison's great warning that our freedoms are usually lost through gradual and silent encroachments, as opposed to violent usurpations. So this has been going on for decades, but it's reached crisis proportions.

And the first thing Congress has to do is decide that Article I, Section 1, actually means what it says, and that all legislative powers reside in Congress. It doesn't reside with the new fourth branch of government, and that's the unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats.

We're losing the rule of law to the discretion of regulators. And as we lose it, we've lost due process. We've lost our rights under the Constitution. And so the first thing we have to do and that Mike and I are doing is sensitize our fellow members of Congress, "Hey, stop the bleeding. Let's reclaim We, the People, the elected representatives of We, the People, the constitutional powers in Article 1, Section 1." It has to do with something called checks and balances.

Article I, Section 7 was deliberately designed by the Founders to keep those spending the money closest to those providing it. The Article I Project is designed to reinvigorate the Congress and restore the principle of the balance of powers to its rightful and necessary place.

A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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