



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on September 15, 2009

Media Targets State Sovereignty Movement

Two hundred and twenty-two years ago this week, the Constitution was signed by the Framers in Philadelphia. To commemorate this historic event, the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia is hosting "Constitution Week."

September 17th celebrates the signing of the Constitution, one of the most influential and important events in American history. All this week, the National Constitution Center is celebrating with a number of events, all culminating on the actual anniversary on Saturday.



Sadly, even though celebrations are taking place in Philly, some of the biggest names in the news media are actively disparaging people who strictly adhere to the original understanding of the U.S. Constitution.

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty was [widely criticized](#) for suggesting that President Obama's proposal for national healthcare might be [unconstitutional](#) as a violation of the Tenth Amendment. State Senator Larry Pogemiller [complained](#) that the Governor is getting in over his head by making such an assertion.

I just think it's a little bit of silly season there for the governor to — I mean, he's governor of the state of Minnesota. He doesn't have the power to make all decisions about all things. I think he should calm down a little bit and focus on the job he has.

But does Senator Pogemiller believe that President Obama has the power to make "all decisions about all things?" If Pogemiller was familiar with his constitutional history, he would understand that Governor Pawlenty, and certainly the Minnesota legislature, has much more authority than the President and even Congress when it comes to the laws within his own state. It would appear that Pogemiller's confusion on the issue is shared by many within the mainstream media. David Shuster of [MSNBC](#) proclaimed that most "people in their right-thinking mind know that the Tenth Amendment is a bunch of baloney."

Fellow MSNBC news anchor [Lawrence O'Donnell](#), filling in for Keith Olberman, who coincidentally seems to be the mouthpiece for the Democratic National Committee, also raged against what he ridiculed as "[tenthers](#)" — individuals who believe in the Jeffersonian principles of a government limited to the powers specifically enumerated within the four corners of our founding document: "The tenther movement ... erroneously claims that the federal government cannot force changes in health care law on the states."

In O'Donnell's view, anyone who would make such a claim is clearly ignorant and trying to dredge up areas that are now settled law. The most often repeated [arguments](#) of today's "[living, breathing](#)"



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Constitution proponents is that the states do not have the right to refuse to enforce laws set by Congress and that the power of constitutional interpretation is vested solely with the federal government. O'Donnell and similar critics should read some of the [speeches](#) of our 7th Vice President, [John C. Calhoun](#). Calhoun addressed this directly in his [Fort Hill address](#).

Stripped of all its covering, the naked question is, whether ours is a federal or a consolidated government; a constitutional or absolute one; a government resting ultimately on the solid basis of the sovereignty of the States or on the unrestrained will of a majority; a form of government, as in all other unlimited ones, in which injustice, and violence, and force must finally prevail. Let it never be forgotten that, where the majority rules without restriction, the minority is the subject; and that, if we should absurdly attribute to the former the exclusive right of construing the Constitution, there would be, in fact, between the sovereign and subject, under such a government, no Constitution, or, at least, nothing deserving the name, or serving the legitimate object of so sacred an instrument.

Calhoun was but one of many of the most prominent advocates of state sovereignty throughout American history referred to as [Jeffersonian Republicans](#). Jeffersonian Republicans were true believers in limited government and unlike many of today's [mainstream conservatives](#), they were consistent in their political ideology when it came to foreign policy and the power of the Presidency. In the words of [John Randolph](#), their principles were "love of peace, hatred of offensive war, jealousy of the State governments towards the General Government and of the influence of the Executive over the coordinate branches of the Government; a dread of standing armies; a loathing of public debt, taxes, and excises; tenderness for the liberty of the citizen; jealousy, Argus-eyed jealousy, of the patronage of the President."

Of course, Jeffersonian Republicans got their name from the great Thomas Jefferson who led [a peaceful revolution](#) against the clearly unconstitutional and shameful [Alien and Sedition Acts](#). Those despicable acts were instituted by advocates of unwritten constitutional power and a more robust central government. They might have succeeded in destroying what was ratified only years before if not for the actions of wise visionaries like Jefferson and James Madison whose [Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions](#) gave a voice to constitutional principles that would govern this great nation for years to come. When biased pundits in the media mockingly dismiss constitutionalists as "fringe kooks" and "tenthers," they disparage our visionary forefathers like Jefferson and Madison. Members of the mainstream media should show a little respect for those brave souls who were titans in restoring our Founding Document while constitutionalists should not forget that, with a little more courage and determination, history just might repeat itself.



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