



The Instant Liberal Frenzy to Ignore the U.S. Constitution

The public reading of the Constitution on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives has quickly drawn a rising tide of outrage from the leftist media, who have called it “blasphemous,” “ostentatious,” and an “airless exercise.”

Among the “blasphemous” errors committed by Republicans running the House this past week is the supposed sin that the GOP leadership chose to read only the operative parts of the U.S. Constitution and omit the parts that had been repealed by amendments. The *New York Times* claimed in a January 7 house [editorial](#) that, by omitting the references to slavery and prohibition, “they made a crucial error by excising its history. When they chose to deliberately drop the sections that became obsolete or offensive, and which were later amended, they missed a chance to demonstrate that this document is not nailed to the door of the past. It remains vital precisely because it can be reimagined.”



Reimagined? What’s that?

“Reimagined” is a leftist synonym for “ignore the clearly written limits of” the document. The problem, from the *New York Times’* perspective, is that they need to discredit the document by reminding people of the Constitution’s past flaws. They need Congress and the American people to feel comfortable with ignoring the clear limits on federal power under the Constitution in order for the federal government to order the people’s lives. Of course, the reason for omitting the parts of the Constitution no longer in effect was to remind Congress of its [oath of office](#) — which all of Congress took earlier that week — to “support and defend” the Constitution. Obviously, Congressmen are no longer obligated to follow the 3/5ths clause or prohibition.

The Left is concerned that if Congress and the American people start reading the U.S. Constitution and begin taking its limits seriously, then the whole leftist political agenda falls. The *New York Times* [continues](#):

The Constitution deserves better than this airless exercise. It was a work of political genius, largely because its authors handed its interpretation to the open minds of posterity. The effect of Thursday’s reading, in case anyone was actually paying attention, was to wrongly suggest that the document was seamless and perfect, as if carved in marble rather than stained with sweat and American blood.

Leftists say Americans need an “interpreter” to read the “stained” U.S. Constitution despite the fact



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that it is written in plain English at the 11th-grade level of reading difficulty. The *Times* seems to be implying that it was written in Sanskrit or heiroglyphics. The *Boston Globe's* Renée Loth also [weighed in](#) with a hysterical column against taking the Constitution seriously:

Only the most rabid originalist would think the Constitution should be implemented precisely as it was written; if so, we'd still be counting blacks as three-fifths of a person. The founders didn't anticipate an end to slavery or women's suffrage, to say nothing of gay rights or Internet privacy issues.

This hysteria is, of course, complete bunk. Many of the Founders, such as John Jay and Benjamin Franklin, [joined](#) antislavery societies. John Adams [wrote](#) abolition of slavery into Massachusetts' 1780 state constitution. The Founders envisioned an end to slavery on a state-by-state basis, and half of the states abolished slavery during the lifetime of the Founders. Moreover, they created a constitutional amendment process if (and in this case, when) it didn't work out that way.

The difference between then and now is that Congress knew it did not have the power under the Constitution to enact a nationwide ban on slavery. So the post-Civil War Congress amended the Constitution ([13th Amendment](#)) to give themselves the power and abolished it once they possessed the legitimate power. As recently as December 1917, when Congress wanted to ban possession of one drug (alcohol), they first sought to give themselves the legitimate constitutional power through the amendment process before passing the Volstead Act beginning prohibition. Today, when Congress wants to ban possession of any other drug — whether marijuana, cocaine, or the cold remedy Sudafed — they simply “reimagine” the Constitution and ignore the clearly limited powers of the federal government under the Constitution.

The Founders envisioned change. But they envisioned that the change would happen through the process they had set up, not by ignoring the Constitution, as the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* have begun to advocate in a frantic manner over the past few days.

The *Times* [stressed](#) that it was particularly concerned that “the reading was conceived so that Republicans could demonstrate their fidelity to the document and make it seem as though Democrats had abandoned it.” The latter, of course, is as true as the former is false.

Many in the Republican Party have ignored and routinely violated the text of the U.S. Constitution, particularly the Republicans' jingoistic neo-conservative wing. The Bush-Cheney presidency sought to to destroy the Fourth Amendment with warrantless wiretapping by the NSA, to destroy the Fifth Amendment by denying terror suspects habeas corpus, to destroy the Sixth Amendment by denying terror suspects a jury trial, and to destroy the Eighth Amendment prohibition on “cruel and unusual punishments.” James Zogby of the *Huffington Post*, who [wrote](#) that reading the Constitution was “idolatry,” noted that “provisions put in place during the Bush Administration and maintained by the Obama White House have gutted fundamental rights guaranteed by more than one-half of the Bill of Rights — without the Tea Party and company raising a peep.” And all that's true, if you don't count Representative [Ron Paul](#) and Senator Rand Paul as part of the Tea Party movement.

But the sudden liberal outrage at the public reading of the U.S. Constitution had nothing to do with liberal outrage against GOP depredations against the Constitution. Rather, it had everything to do with an urgent need to distract the American people from taking seriously the Constitution's concept of granting only a few, specific, narrow, delegated powers to the federal government. The *Washington Post's* Alexandra Petri [whined](#) in a January 6 blog post that “the Constitution has become a cult of



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late.... The Constitution is not even the Bible — speaking of books people praise and don't read. If people actually read Leviticus, the world would be paralyzed by constant crises of faith.”

Well, the leftist media may not be paralyzed by a crisis of faith, but no, wait ... maybe they already did read both Leviticus and the U.S. Constitution.

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