



Written by [Charles Scaliger](#) on February 9, 2018

## Sheriff Richard Mack Runs for Congress

Richard Mack, former sheriff of Graham County, Arizona, is nationally renowned for his participation in the landmark 1997 case *Mack v. United States* (also known as *Printz v. United States*), in which a group of county sheriffs, led by Mack, challenged the constitutionality of provisions in the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act that required county sheriffs to carry out at the behest of Congress background checks on gun purchasers. Arguing that such provisions violate the 10th Amendment, Mack and his associates were forced, after an adverse ruling by the notoriously leftist Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, to appeal to the Supreme Court. In June of 1997, the Supreme Court, led by Justice Antonin Scalia, overturned the Ninth Circuit Court's ruling, and found that the commandeering of local law enforcement by Congress did indeed constitute a violation of the 10th Amendment. The decision was a landmark reaffirmation of the principle of "dual sovereignty," the notion that, indeed, the states retain "residual and inviolable sovereignty" under the Constitution — sovereignty that precedes that of the federal government, as made clear by the 10th Amendment.



Nowadays, Richard Mack lives in Gilbert, Arizona, and teaches high school in the Phoenix area. He is also running for Congress as a principled constitutionalist and Americanist in a crowded Republican primary field. *The New American* visited with Mack recently to discuss his many accomplishments and his ongoing congressional campaign.

Richard Mack grew up in Safford, Arizona, and was a standout athlete, especially in football. Although recruited by the likes of Penn State, he chose to attend Brigham Young University instead. Because his father worked for the FBI, Mack sought a career in law enforcement as well. However, he ended up joining the police in Provo, Utah, where he gained firsthand experience with the criminal underworld as an undercover narcotics agent for six months. This time was extremely difficult, since he was unable to contact his family and had to live, dress, and act as a member of the criminal underground. It was also during this time, Mack told *The New American*, that he began to question the wisdom and efficacy of the federal war on drugs.

Although he is known as a staunch constitutionalist and Americanist patriot, Mack was not raised as



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such. He attributes his education in such matters to his wife's family, some of whom were members of the John Birch Society, and to such influences as Cleon Skousen.

Eventually, Mack decided to move back to his hometown in southeastern Arizona, where he ran for sheriff of Graham County soon after his return and, against the expectations of many, was elected. During his two terms as sheriff, Mack became nationally known for his staunch defense of the Constitution, and in particular his opposition to federal government encroachments on state sovereignty. Now, as a candidate for Congress in the Trump era, Mack believes there is an opportunity to begin seriously rolling back the unconstitutional activities of the federal government.

"I want to help President Trump to drain the swamp," he told *The New American*. "What has happened so far is a start, but the president can't do it by himself. I envision really draining the swamp. We need to get rid of the Department of Education. We need to get rid of the IRS. Those are the kinds of things that need to happen for things to really change, and I don't see anybody in Washington right now who's willing to do those kinds of things. We need elected leaders who aren't worried about getting re-elected, but will be completely loyal to their oath of office to uphold the Constitution. If I get elected, I won't worry about being re-elected. My only priority will be restoring constitutional government."

Candidate Mack isn't shy about the need to abolish all "superfluous and corrupt" federal agencies. Crimes committed by the likes of the BATF, the DEA, the EPA, and even the FBI cannot be tolerated by America any longer, he says. "All of these agencies attack innocent Americans with impunity and unbridled cruelty," his campaign website points out. "We need members of Congress with the courage and determination to get rid of these 'swamp dwellers.' Freedom and the American dream cannot co-exist with such rogue criminal bureaucrats."

Another priority for Mack is restoring state control over the millions of acres of land controlled by the federal government, particularly in western states such as Arizona. "Whoever decided that federal bureaucrats can run government land in Arizona, Utah, Nevada, or wherever, better than the states themselves? Why do we need a BLM [Bureau of Land Management]? All those BLM lands here in Arizona should belong to the state of Arizona. What about the Grand Canyon? It should belong to Arizona. Arizona is just as capable of preserving the Grand Canyon as the federal government."

As a former lawman, Richard Mack is angry at the way the federal government has usurped and abused police powers not granted it in the Constitution. Pointing out that the Constitution only gives the federal government jurisdiction over a handful of crimes, such as piracy, he deplores the fact that the government now conducts surveillance on a massive scale over its own citizens — and, as the Clinton-FISA scandal shows, does not hesitate to abuse those powers. "Most law enforcement should be a local matter," he told *The New American*. "These abuses carried out by the FBI for political reasons are nothing new. This kind of thing has been going on for a long time, and both parties do it."

Reflecting on the Nunes memo and the burgeoning scandal of a corrupt Clinton campaign in cahoots with Obama's Justice Department that threatens to engulf official Washington, Mack emphasized to *The New American* that recent revelations are just the tip of the iceberg. "Both Republicans and Democrats have been guilty of this sort of thing for a long time. President Trump's not always constitutionalist, but he is an outsider and they're doing everything they can to destroy him. I think his instincts are often right, but we still have this huge debt. We still have out-of-control government spending. We still have a federal government mostly made up of people who have no regard for the Constitution. President Trump has done some good things, but he needs help. He promised to drain the swamp, and I'm all for



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that, but it needs to go a lot further than what we've seen so far."

In turbulent times and a crowded primary field, it is impossible to know how far Mack's campaign will go. But his zeal for the Constitution and for liberty are conspicuous and genuine. Given his history of improbable electoral wins, Richard Mack may be poised to surprise his opponents — and delight partisans of limited, local government — yet again.

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