



The 17th Amendment Was a Mistake — Some House Republicans Want It Repealed

A number of House Republicans want to change how federal senators are elected so those lawmakers will focus on serving their states instead of their ambitions. They mean to do this by repealing the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Representative Keith Self (R-Texas) just introduced a joint resolution to repeal the 17th Amendment. “The current system has given us six-year politicians more focused on national ambitions and the institution of the U.S. Senate than on the states they serve,” Self said in a press release announcing the measure. He [added](#):



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Our Founding Fathers designed the Senate to protect state sovereignty and act as a check on federal overreach. If senators are supposed to represent their states, then the states should choose them. Repealing the 17th Amendment will restore that constitutional balance and make the Senate more accountable to the people of Texas and every other state in the union.

Self, whose Freedom Score in *The New American's* Freedom Index is [90 percent](#), points out that the Framers created a congressional structure that includes a chamber that represents the people directly (the House of Representatives), and one that represents the states (the Senate). But “the 17th Amendment disrupted this delicate balance,” he said. It weakened state governments while contributing “to the steady expansion of federal power at the expense of the states.”

Infamous Year

The 17th Amendment shifted the election power of senators from state legislatures to direct, popular vote. It was ratified in the infamous year of 1913. That’s the same year the Federal Reserve Act was passed, and it’s the same year the 16th Amendment, which burdened Americans with the federal income tax, was passed. As Representative Thomas Massie (R-KY.) [told us](#) last year, “If we could just repeal the year 1913 altogether, I think we’d be in better shape in this country.”

As we’ve [written](#) in the past, the Founders’ intent was a system that wouldn’t tolerate senators who didn’t serve their constituents:

When the Constitution was adopted, state governments were given great power and, in particular, state legislatures were given vast power. This was intended to make the language of the Constitution, which preserves the states as sovereign entities, protect that sovereignty in practice. When the two senators from each state were chosen by state legislatures, then those senators would not last long if they advocated a surrender of state



power to the federal government.... After that, there were virtually no real checks that state governments had to preserve their balanced rights in our federal system.

Publisher's Propaganda

As is usual with historic changes that have hurt the country immensely, mainstream propaganda played a role in convincing people it was a good idea to change how senators were elected. William Randolph Hearst, a publisher with control over several newspapers and magazines around the country at the time, hired fiction writer David Graham Phillips to write several articles promoting direct election (you can't make this stuff up).

Hearst published Phillips' series in *Cosmopolitan* magazine in 1906. The series, according to the U.S. government's otherwise [generous treatment](#) of the topic, "offered an unsympathetic (and largely fictionalized) account of senators as pawns of industrialists and financiers."

Republicans for Repeal

Today's attempt to undo the 17th has several House Republican co-sponsors. The following is a list of those legislators and their Freedom Index scores in parentheses: Eric Burlison of Missouri (94 percent), Andrew Clyde of Georgia (90 percent), Paul Gosar of Arizona (86 percent), Andy Harris of Maryland (79 percent), Scott Perry of Pennsylvania (83 percent), Clay Higgins of Louisiana (82 percent), Sheri Biggs of South Carolina (95 percent), and Michael Cloud of Texas (92 percent).

Burlison accompanied his support with a statement pointing out the role of the 17th Amendment on the nation's out-of-control debt. "It's no coincidence that over the last century, Washington has concentrated more power in itself and buried the country in debt," he [said](#). "If we're serious about reining in federal power and spending, we should be willing to reconsider the change that, together with the 16th Amendment, has helped fuel its growth more than any other."

Gosar issued a statement on how lobby groups have benefited from the 17th. "The Founders intended the Senate to be the voice of the states in our federal system, not a perpetual roadblock to the will of the American people," he said. "Over time, the Seventeenth Amendment weakened that connection and shifted more power to Washington insiders and special interests."

Higgins believes no other change to the U.S. Constitution has harmed the American people more than the 17th. "The 17th Amendment is arguably the most injurious amendment in history," he said. "The Founders knew what they were doing, and We the People should restore the original Constitutional process for election of US Senators."

Past Attempts

This isn't the first time modern politicians have sought to get rid of the 17th amendment. In 2010, Representative Louie Gohmert of Texas proposed that U.S. senators once again be elected by state legislatures. In 2017, then-Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee called for a repeal of the 17th Amendment. "The Founders had it right," he said. And in 2020, Senator Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) called for the repeal of the 17th Amendment. Sasse wrote an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* promoting this view. "The old saying used to be that all politics is local, but today — thanks to the internet, 24/7 cable news and a cottage industry dedicated to political addiction — politics is polarized and national," he said. "That would change if state legislatures had direct control over who serves in the Senate."

This measure has a high bar to clear. It needs two-thirds approval of both chambers of Congress and it



Written by [Paul Dragu](#) on June 29, 2026

needs to be ratified by 38 states. That is unlikely to happen. But this issue needs to be brought up continuously. And, perhaps, by the time the next generation of voters become the majority voting blocs, the idea of undoing the 17th Amendment will finally become reality.



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