



Is there really a threat to liberty and self-government that makes BHI necessary? Are our rights as Americans endangered? Is our Constitution, the document that defines our republic, truly threatened? Take a look at what is happening right now in the world of American politics and decide for yourself.

1) In our now wildly accelerated election cycle we have one candidate for President who said the following on a nationwide radio show:

“I would rather have a clean government than one where ‘First Amendment’ rights are being respected, that has become corrupt. If I had my choice, I’d rather have the clean government.”

While we here at BHI are all for clean government, it is not clear how this candidate imagines a “clean government” existing without freedom of speech. Freedom of speech holds the 1st position in the 1st Amendment because without it the freedoms of the press, assembly, religion and the redress of grievances become useless. Some have mentioned that it is even less clear how the candidate, if elected, would be able to take the oath of office, which vows to uphold the Constitution and the 1st Amendment.

2) Three candidates for President are currently talking about how America needs Universal (Socialized) healthcare. Not one of the three has mentioned that it would require changing the Constitution. The 10th Amendment does not give power to create a healthcare system to the Federal government at all. In fact, the 10th Amendment says that the Federal government is limited only to the powers it has already been given. The States and the people have all other power.

3) Within the last year the Supreme Court, entrusted to be the protectors and interpreters of the Constitution, voted that any local government has the right to take private property through eminent domain if they can make more money selling it, say to a developer. This decision ignores the 5th Amendment, which states that a citizen will not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation. In fact, taking it to sell to a developer does not even qualify as “public use.”

4) A new Senator has put forth a bill that says only Congress can declare war. BHI is sure that the Senator has only the best of intentions. The only problem with the bill is that it is already constitutional law. The power to declare war resides only with the Legislative branch. Once war is declared the President (executive branch) is Commander in Chief. We can understand the Senator’s confusion of course, because according to the Constitution the United States has not been at war since 1945. Not since the Presidency of Harry Truman Congress has voted to give the President the power to take military action. Nowhere in the Constitution is Congress given the ability to abdicate its powers in this way.

Right now, former Secretaries of State James A. Baker III and Warren Christopher are heading a private, bipartisan panel to study this lingering and gnawing national question: Who does the Constitution say has the power to begin, conduct and end wars? Their job will not be unduly difficult if they read the document. If that is too long they could read this:

“The constitution vests the power of declaring war in Congress; therefore no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they shall have deliberated upon the subject and authorized such a measure.”

That was written by George Washington. He probably had a pretty good idea what he was talking about, since he oversaw the writing of the Constitution.

Those are just four quick examples. They were taken from both major political parties and all three branches of government. They beg the question “How can this be happening?” How can it be that our long established system of government, rights and liberties are slowly being eroded by people who have sworn oaths to uphold them? While vast conspiracies make for popular villains, the answer is far simpler. People don’t know. We have lost what Dr. Benjamin Rush called the “society of knowledge” necessary for freedom to exist. Our representative government reflects who we are. If we don’t know and value our founding principals and rights, how can we expect those we elect to know and value them? After all, they represent us.

This is why it matters. This is what makes BHI and the organizations like it necessary. We must do all we can to let Americans know their foundations, their rights and their responsibilities in a free society. We have to tell the stories of how those rights came to them and the price that has been paid repeatedly to keep them. In the end, people will only fight for what they treasure, and people can’t treasure what they don’t know.

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