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Bishop wants states to be able to kill federal laws

BY MATT CANHAM
 The Salt Lake Tribune

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If the president really doesn't like an act of Congress, he can take out his veto pen and kill it. Rep. Rob Bishop believes states deserve to have a very similar power.

Bishop, R-Utah, announced Tuesday that he would sponsor a constitutional amendment that would allow states to reject an act of Congress as long as two-thirds of them were in agreement.

Dubbed the Repeal Amendment, it is the brainchild of Randy Barnett, a law professor associated with the libertarian Cato Institute. He believes the judiciary has failed to keep federal power limited and said the amendment would give states a prominent role in the nation's system of checks and balances.

"It allows thousands of democratically elected representatives outside the Beltway to check the will of 535 elected representatives in Washington, D.C.," Barnett wrote in an opinion column.

Bishop likes the idea of empowering the states, saying the amendment will provide "a powerful tool to check an overzealous and power-hungry federal government."

Bishop leads the 10th Amendment Task Force in Congress, a Republican states' rights group. He announced his sponsorship for the amendment at an event surrounded by leaders from 10 states, including outgoing Utah House Speaker Dave Clark.

Constitutional amendments are extremely difficult to enact. Two-thirds of the House and Senate must sign off along with three-fourths of the state legislatures. Copyright 2010 The Salt Lake Tribune. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

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