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## **A Primer On The Constitution For CNN's Brian Stelter**

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Even for the wildly biased CNN media critic Brian Stelter, a tweet of his over the weekend betrayed a stunning lack of understanding of the basic tenets of the American government. Now, I don't want to shock anyone, but the tweet was an attack on President Donald Trump. That is, after all, pretty much the sole reason why CNN exists at this point. So let's have a look and see what the problem is.

“The White House has made a deliberate political calculation that it will better serve Trump's interest to put the onus on governors — rather than the federal government — to figure out how to move ahead.” So taking Stelter's advice, I let it sink in. Having sufficiently marinated in the quote, I arrived at the conclusion anyone who took 5<sup>th</sup> grade American history would have: This is exactly how federalism is supposed to work.

As someone who writes for an outlet named “The Federalist,” I'm in a unique position to help Stelter and CNN out, and since I am a nice guy, I am happy to do so. When James Madison brought his Virginia Plan for the constitution to Philadelphia he envisioned an almost all-powerful national government with a fully proportional legislature and the authority to overturn almost any state actions. As we all know, well most of us anyway, smaller states objected to this assault on their sovereignty and a compromise was reached, one we refer to as “federalism.”

It is important to note that during the Constitutional Convention, it was the small states jealous of their rights that were associated with the term federalism. Those like Madison, in favor of the Constitution, were viewed as proponents of “national government.” It was Alexander Hamilton, Madison's “Federalist Papers” co-author, who cleverly co-opted the term to describe our constitutional system.

Under this system most decisions were still left to the states. A central notion throughout our country's history is that state and local government, which are much more intimately acquainted with the nuances and needs of their communities, should lead when possible. It is arguably the most unique element of the American system of government.

In fairness to Stelter, though also undermining his poorly thought out point, even Trump sends some confused messages about what exactly the president's authority regarding ending state lockdowns is. He says he has such authority, though he doesn't explain how, but that he prefers the governors take the lead, which he refers to as the constitutional approach. In all likelihood, Trump is simply refusing to preemptively state he doesn't have the power to lift the lockdowns.

Aside from the basic misunderstanding of government that Stelter displays, there is another problem with this tweet, one that echoes the impeachment process. Stelter is intimating that Trump's only concern is his own political fortunes in the upcoming election. Just as the left was convinced that Trump could have seen no national interest in his dealings with Ukraine, only personal ones, now they are making that argument about the response to the virus.

It is absolutely absurd and it makes no sense. It doesn't take a political genius to realize that the 2020 presidential election at this point is going to be a referendum on Trump's handling of the pandemic. If the American people think he did a good job and are happy with the results, he will likely be re-elected, if not, "Hello, President Biden." Of course his personal political ambitions are tied to the virus outcomes.

This being the case, it is silly to suggest that Trump is somehow hiding behind governors to shirk blame for shortcomings. He knows, in fact everyone knows, that his chances at a second term are inexorably linked to how the pandemic plays out. The reason he is giving the governors so much latitude is that he thinks they have done a good job by and large, and understand the needs of their states better than he could.

What is ultimately so absurd about CNN's ridiculous and counterproductive constant Trump bashing is that we will soon know the results of this outbreak. We will be able to look back and see what good decisions were made, what bad decisions were made. As the curve of cases flattens and the projections of death decrease, CNN will always as ever find ways to slam the president, but the facts that they claim to love will be on display.

I don't know if Brian Stelter needs one of those Cato Institute pocket constitutions or what, but the transparency of his and his network's disdain for Trump has reached the point where they simply can't be trusted, either to understand American history, or to treat those they disagree with remotely fairly.