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May 25, 2010 11:21 AM UTC by John Stossel

LINE-ITEM VETO

President Obama wants Congress to give him the line-item veto -- that is, the power to veto specific parts of Congressional bills, rather than the whole thing. That way, supposedly, the president can just cut out the waste. *The Washington Post*:

Under the proposal, Obama and future presidents would have 45 days to comb legislation for pork-barrel projects they deem unnecessary and send a list of rescissions to Capitol Hill. Congress would then have 25 days to approve the entire list or reject it without changes.

On its face, it seems like a good idea. It may cut down on useless pork like bridges to nowhere. But the suggestion that it will help control spending is laughable.

"A lot of people want to believe our looming budgetary crisis is caused by bridges to nowhere" and other pork barrel projects, said Cato Institute vice president Gene Healy. "But it's not true. That sort of thing is a rounding error" compared with defense spending and entitlement programs."

Exactly. It would be nice to eliminate pork, but it's chump change compared to the big picture. Even now, Congress and the president are pushing for \$200 Billion in new spending.

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**Andrew\_M\_Garland**

A line item veto would not reduce spending. It would create an all-powerful President who would then control all earmark spending. Any Representative who stepped out of line would see his pork selectively cut. It is a good thing it is unconstitutional. Dont look at govt power as if a wise and benevolent man is going to use it. It just might be a Chicago political hack and socialist revolutionary who gets to use it.

May 26, 2010 at 12:11 am

**Adam**

It almost seems like a good idea to allow a a line-item veto. If the president can gut any line in your bill, you would be stupid to offer him more than one line. It would make these one-line bills either impossible to pass or require that the president announce his exact stance on the single line of a given issue. At the very least, if nothing gets passed, it is probably still a step in the right direction, given what they pass these days.

May 25, 2010 at 11:16 pm

**Alejandro Gonzalez**

I think this will create more gridlock. Representatives won't trust the President in legislative negotiations for the simple reason that The President can just betray them once the bill passes the house. It will hinder inter-party cooperation.

May 25, 2010 at 10:21 pm

**Paul**

The Line Item Veto is totally unnecessary. Don't you remember? Bill Clinton told us, "The era of big government is over!" That was 1996. And then Al Gore Reinvented Government. So, what do we need to worry for now?

May 25, 2010 at 6:45 pm

**MAX**

Ronald Reagan pushed hard for the line item veto power but the Dems would never give it to him. His response was to veto entire bills and send them back to Congress to cut out the wasteful pork. All we need is a President with enough spine to do that. We haven't had one since.

May 25, 2010 at 6:22 pm

**John, Rhode Island**

Once a President can veto certain parts of a law, it breaks the separation of powers. It eliminates the compromise (generally speaking) necessary to pass laws in Congress. If a line-item veto was such a good thing, in my mind the founding fathers would have included it in the Constitution.

May 25, 2010 at 4:53 pm

(1 Reply)

**MCC**

The line item veto was ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in Clinton v. City of New York (1998) as violating the Presentment Clause. How would it be constitutional now when it wasn't twelve years ago?

May 25, 2010 at 4:21 pm

**erica**

Forget Line Item Vetos, I want Line Item Voting. Go on record for whatever you want AND don't want in a bill. This is the only way to stop the pork projects hidden in good bills or reps being attacked for not voting for something when they had to vote down the good to get rid of the bad stuff.

May 25, 2010 at 3:22 pm

**PeteR..**

I'm for it. I know it's a rounding error but there will be lots of shady characters who are gaming the system that won't get the money they thought they would. I don't see Obama crossing off much but a conservative president could have a field day as my Dad would say. Also, I thought they had to vote for each item they wanted to save. That way the whole country could see what they felt was important but most thought of as gruesome waste.

May 25, 2010 at 3:02 pm

**Gary**

I thought candidate Obama promised not to sign any bills with any pork in them. If he kept this promise then he would not need this new authority.  
May 25, 2010 at 2:19 pm

**Brad**

Rather than Line Item Veto, we should push for single subject laws. That takes care of two serious issues at once: ridiculously long and complicated bills (ie health care) and all the unrelated pork buried in them.  
May 25, 2010 at 2:12 pm  
(1 Reply)

**Marion Bates**

A ploy. No cost cutting will take place it is to defeat the changes coming with the new congress. The modifications to this congress excessive spending will be the only thins line item vetoed. Another government roadblock to real cost cutting.  
May 25, 2010 at 2:12 pm

**Denny Seilheimer**

Allow me to suggest that the citizens of this country use a line item veto to remove the president, congress women and congress men who are not doing the job we are paying them to do. I know that if I fail to do my job my boss will fire me. What are we waiting for? When their paycheck stops it will be hard to find any of them in or near Washington, D.C. Would this be a blessing? You decide.  
May 25, 2010 at 1:36 pm

**Nate**

The idea that the line-item veto is unconstitutional is a bit absurd. Congress granted that power. If they want, congress could just write every single provision as a separate bill and the president could veto the ones he did not like.  
May 25, 2010 at 12:33 pm

**Jessica**

In 1998 the Supreme Court ruled that the line item veto was unconstitutional (Clinton, et al. v. New York City, et al.). They cited the separation of powers doctrine. The Constitution says that Congress has the sole power to legislate. The President only has the power to approve or veto legislation as it was sent to him by Congress. He shouldn't be allowed to edit it because in doing so he is essentially rewriting the legislation and that is a violation of the separation of powers doctrine.  
May 25, 2010 at 12:20 pm  
(3 Replies)

**Davie Jones**

Exactly Dell. However, I can also envision taking it a step further. Several Republican amendments were added to healthcare to lessen its impact. If you can line item veto, what is to stop you from eliminating the legal - as well as economic - amendments?  
May 25, 2010 at 12:08 pm  
(1 Reply)

**Dell**

Sounds like a perfect power grab to me! A perfect way to rid all that Republican pork and leave the really good, Democrat stuff, for his peeps.  
May 25, 2010 at 11:56 am  
(1 Reply)

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