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Barack Obama, Federalist?

Damon W. Root | November 18, 2009

Writing in the *DC Examiner*, the Cato Institute's Gene Healy cautions against getting too excited about President Barack Obama's alleged commitment to federalism:

Friends of federalism cheered last month when the Obama administration reversed the Bush policy of prosecuting medical marijuana cases in states that have legalized the practice. Welcome though that change was, let's hold the applause.

Not yet a year into his administration, Obama's record on 10th Amendment issues is already clear: He'll let the states have their way when their policies please blue team sensibilities and he'll call in the feds when they don't. Thus, he'll grant California a waiver to allow it to raise auto emissions standards, but he'll bring the hammer down when the state tries to cut payments to unionized health care workers....

Our federal system shouldn't be a red team/blue team issue, respected or flouted depending on who's up and who's down. Conservatives are learning to rue their abandonment of federalist principles during the last administration; liberals may come to regret their rush toward centralization during the next.

Read the whole thing [here](#). Reason's Jacob Sullum on Obama and medical marijuana [here](#).

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Old Mexican | 11.18.09 @ 6:00PM | #

Not yet a year into his administration, Obama's record on 10th Amendment issues is already clear: He'll let the states have their way when their policies please blue team sensibilities and he'll call in the feds when they don't.

Indeed, Obama is for *managed* Federalism - managed by him, of course.

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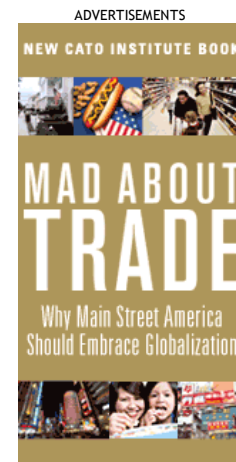
Rimfax | 11.18.09 @ 6:01PM | #

Conservatives are learning to rue their abandonment of federalist principles....

Isn't this a bit naive?

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€ and Hitler | 11.18.09 @ 6:02PM | #

What dumbfucks alleged it?

Lists of mental defectives are handy.

[reply to this](#)

Tom | 11.18.09 @ 6:06PM | #

Unfortunately, it is our Constitution that has allowed this abuse of states' rights.

[reply to this](#)

pmains | 11.18.09 @ 6:51PM | #

States don't have rights. They have powers, which they are granted by rights-having humans.

[reply to this](#)

JW | 11.18.09 @ 6:09PM | #

Writing in the DC Examiner, the Cato Institute's Gene Healy cautions against get too excited about President Barack Obama's alleged commitment to federalism

Well, duh. He's lying through his teeth.

[reply to this](#)

Libertymike | 11.18.09 @ 6:10PM | #

States don't have rights; individuals do.

[reply to this](#)

The Libertarian Guy | 11.18.09 @ 6:43PM | #

So, it's okay for the Fed to take highway funds, then demand that states jump through hoops to get their own money back?

[reply to this](#)

pmains | 11.18.09 @ 6:52PM | #

Please change your name to non sequitur guy. That is all.

[reply to this](#)

The Libertarian Guy | 11.18.09 @ 8:24PM | #

I don't think you're getting where I'm coming from:

State A says "We want to set our own seatbelt policy."

Federal Bully Government says "Fine, but we're keeping the money we took from your state coffers, and you won't get it back to maintain your roads."

Is that fair? Is that in keeping with the 10th Amendment?

The fed hands down "thou shalt" and "thou may not" edicts like it owns the whole goddamned pile. States can't set their own speed limits, drinking ages, vehicle emission standards (except for California, which is a prime example of what's wrong with government), and way too many other things that should be up to the states, not the morons in Washington DC.

NOW, do you get it?

[reply to this](#)

Brendan Perez | 11.18.09 @ 6:46PM | #

True. Only people have rights.

States have powers.

[reply to this](#)

CTHORM@IBIS | 11.18.09 @ 7:51PM | #

If only the founders had the foresight to grant 'powers' to the people and 'rights' to the states. Then we could fly and have super strength, while those sucker states had to bitch



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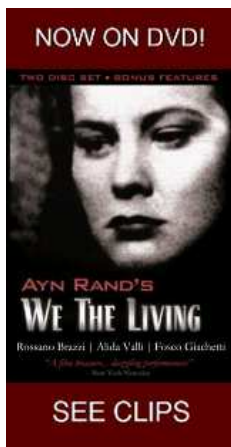


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and moan about presumption of innocence.

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The Libertarian Guy | 11.18.09 @ 8:04PM | #

Sorry, but I believe states should not be bullied or blackmailed by the Almighty FedGov.

Now, p mains, up above, seems to not get this. Why is it so difficult a concept?

Oh, that old horseshit argument the left likes to trot out (states rights = a yearning for the days of slave ownership, yadda yadda) rears its head far too often, but smart people know slavery - or anything like it - will EVER happen here again. But the kinds of drooling morons who take MediaMatters seriously, believe that shit.

Which is why saying that states should have rights - autonomy - is NOT a bad thing, nor is it a "non sequitur".

Sheesh.

[reply to this](#)

R C Dean | 11.18.09 @ 6:12PM | #

What commitment to federalism?

[reply to this](#)

Attorney | 11.18.09 @ 6:24PM | #

Our federal system shouldn't be a red team/blue team issue, respected or flouted depending on who's up and who's down.

Sadly, our political class doesn't have the spine to obey the Constitution even when it doesn't benefit them to do so.

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 11.18.09 @ 6:31PM | #

Calling it "states' rights" has always been a marketing mistake. Call it "a desperately needed additional check on federal power" instead.

[reply to this](#)

P Brooks | 11.18.09 @ 6:36PM | #

Conservatives are learning to rue their abandonment of federalist principles during the last administration

"C'mon, Honey, let me in. You know I love you, Baby. I love you so much, sometimes it makes me crazy. I wouldn't hit you if I didn't care about you."

[reply to this](#)

Art-P.O.G. | 11.18.09 @ 6:50PM | #

"You drive me wild, baby. I love you so much, baby, sometimes I love you with my fists."

[reply to this](#)

Pro Libertate | 11.18.09 @ 6:37PM | #

You'll rue the day!

[reply to this](#)

Stewie Griffin | 11.18.09 @ 6:45PM | #

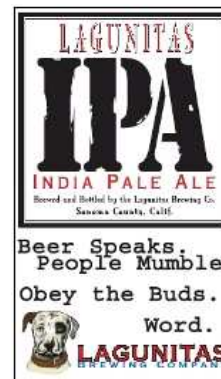
Well... start ruing!

[reply to this](#)

Episiarch | 11.18.09 @ 6:38PM | #

Frankly, I'd rather have President Camacho; he'd probably have more respect for federalism as long as you told him it has electrolytes and shit.

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Bergholt Stuttley Johnson | 11.18.09 @ 7:32PM | #

Racist.

[reply to this](#)

CTHORM@IBIS | 11.18.09 @ 7:53PM | #

BSJ is just a Gatorade lobbyist. Get out of Brawndo's way, or President Camacho will slap you with his 'gavel.'

[reply to this](#)

Louis Farrakhan | 11.18.09 @ 8:37PM | #

You're racist for bringing it up, Bergholt.

I'll bet you have Jewish blood in you.

[reply to this](#)

South Carolina Representative | 11.18.09 @ 8:11PM | #

I got a solution - You're a DICK!!

[reply to this](#)

Hugh Akston | 11.18.09 @ 6:59PM | #

Our federal system shouldn't be a red team/blue team issue, respected or flouted depending on who's up and who's down.

You guys, what if we put down in writing what specific powers the federal government has, and then say *in that same document* that anything not granted to the federal government rests with the States?

Whaddya think?

[reply to this](#)

CTHORM@IBIS | 11.18.09 @ 7:54PM | #

Kind of sounds like an EULA. I wouldn't read it either.

[reply to this](#)

Stine | 11.19.09 @ 12:46AM | #

Sounds like a good idea so long as you don't also put in the same document specific powers denied to the states.

You'll also have to invent a kind of citizen that wants to protect that governing document at all costs and won't ignore parts of it when he finds them to be convenient.

[reply to this](#)

Adam R. | 11.18.09 @ 7:26PM | #

Of course this only reminds me of Cato going ga-ga for Fred Thompson of all candidates during the campaign for having a very small amount of federalist positions.

[reply to this](#)

Barack Obama | 11.18.09 @ 7:38PM | #

Stop whining, plebes! I know all.

[reply to this](#)

BakedPenguin | 11.18.09 @ 8:12PM | #

That headline is right up there with "Rudy Giuliani, Libertarian"

[reply to this](#)

dunderoooooooooooooooooooo | 11.19.09 @ 8:05AM | #

Rudy Giuliani is the greatest libertarian since me. Anyone who says different is a whiny little liberal wiener who envies me because I was in the Navy and beat my wife. They also want us to lose to the Islam-O-Fascists and live under sharia law.

[reply to this](#)

MNG | 11.18.09 @ 8:16PM | #

Obama is no federalist. Like most national pols he's all for federalism when it produces some result he likes, and opposed when it does not.

[reply to this](#)

Viv | 11.18.09 @ 8:27PM | #

Has Obama ever uttered the word "federalism" or stated that he is committed to it, that we know of? Not that I know of. Of course he's just honoring state laws of which liberals approve, and would do the same for federal laws. Anyone who thought or thinks otherwise is naive.

[reply to this](#)

SusanM | 11.18.09 @ 8:36PM | #

A little OT, but something to think about nevertheless: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v.....re=related>

[reply to this](#)

Mad Max | 11.18.09 @ 8:36PM | #

Just to emphasize what others have already pointed out: The 10th Amendment does not expand the power of the states, it limits the power of the feds:

'The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, *or to the people.*' [emphasis added]

So in areas where the federal Constitution doesn't empower the federal government or restrict the states, the federal government is forbidden to meddle, but that doesn't mean that state meddling is legitimate. It simply means that abuses by a state government need to be dealt with by the people, not by the feds.

While the feds don't have the right to stop *every* abuse at the state level, the people can and should. If the states are abusing their power so much that a federal restriction is needed, the people can and should press for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to let the feds stop the states.

Instead of saying that, say, a federal takeover of medicine 'violates states rights,' as if to suggest that the only problem is that the states and not the feds should be doing the takeover, why not just say that the feds are acting unconstitutionally.

[reply to this](#)

Mo | 11.18.09 @ 9:47PM | #

He'll let the states have their way when their policies please blue team sensibilities and he'll call in the feds when they don't.

Has anyone on this site been alive during a presidency where that wasn't the case (replacing red for blue when appropriate)? Who here was alive during the Coolidge administration?

[reply to this](#)

Tulpa | 11.18.09 @ 11:17PM | #

Barack Obama, Federalist?

In the Alexander Hamilton sense, perhaps.

[reply to this](#)

Paul | 11.19.09 @ 12:33AM | #

...rinse, repeat...

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College Student | 11.19.09 @ 12:45AM | #

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http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.....lKxA_3d_3d

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Kolohe | 11.19.09 @ 4:59AM | #
tits or stfu

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