

Everyone who takes an oath of office, whether it be for Congress, the judicial branch or the presidency, vows to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution." Because of this oath, the American people rightfully expect their public officials to do their job. In Congress, that includes passing a budget.

Members of the House of Representatives recently cast their votes for the No Budget, No Pay Act. Although I supported the concept behind the No Budget, No Pay bill, the 27th Amendment to our Constitution specifically says, "No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect" until after an intervening election. The language is clear and unambiguous. All members take their own oath of fidelity to the Constitution, and I respect the view of my colleagues who disagree. However, the No Budget, No Pay Act does not meet constitutional standards. Therefore, my only choice was to vote no.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and I consider it a high responsibility to uphold its principles and preserve the contractual obligation. As Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia has said regarding the importance of the Constitution and the law, "The judge who always likes the results he reaches is a bad judge." Similarly, the representative who disregards the plain meaning and language of the Constitution, when inconvenient, to pass legislation he favors is not being faithful to his oath.

President Obama taught constitutional law, yet he has the most fundamental and straightforward process of federal lawmaking backward. Congress is to make the laws, and the executive branch carries them out, not the other way around. Last year, Mr. Obama said, "This is my last election, and after my election, I have more flexibility." He didn't realize his microphone was on, but his message rang loud and clear. He unveiled his vision for his second term during his inaugural address last week.

The president believes that during his first term he was unable to follow through on his agenda, but his constitutional abuses show otherwise. Mr. Obama has violated the rule of law and his oath repeatedly when it was inconvenient for him to work for a constitutional legislative solution.

By implementing the Dream Act via executive fiat, actually legislating by press conference, Mr. Obama usurped the specific constitutional authority of Congress to craft the nation's immigration laws. There was no ambiguity in Congress about whether the Dream Act's

amnesty program should be the law of the land, because it has been rejected by Congress several times, yet Mr. Obama issued an executive fiat creating immigration law out of thin air.

Mr. Obama's executive elimination of all work requirements of "welfare to work" violated the 1996 welfare reform work legislation, which was signed by President Clinton. Mr. Obama violated the Constitution by waiving provisions that the law specifically stated could not be waived by the president.

Similarly, the rule published by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius directing even religious institutional health care providers to offer abortifacients, sterilizations and contraceptives free of charge was unprecedented. This violated the religious convictions of the Catholic Church as well as many other religious institutions. After getting heat from religious organizations, Mr. Obama held a press conference where he announced an "accommodation" for religious organizations and a requirement for insurance companies to provide the very same products "for free." Again, the president legislated by press conference and presidential edict.

More recently, the courts have been forced to step in to address the Obama administration's overreach. Mr. Obama, by attempting to use his recess appointment power to appoint members to the National Labor Relations Board while the Senate was not in recess, clearly violated his constitutional powers as president — and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit unanimously told him so. The appointments violated the Constitution and resulted in unnecessary uncertainty for job creators who are bound by the law and the Constitution.

Unconstitutional violations of the separation of powers, rooted in Mr. Obama's lawless approach to federal policymaking, are exactly the reason the framers of our Constitution designed a three-branch government. James Madison warned in the Federalist Papers that power is "of an encroaching nature," and that the three branches of government need "practical security for each, against the invasion of the others." I carefully consider each vote I cast, even when political repercussions are at stake, because it is essential to our posterity that we all "preserve, protect, and defend" the Constitution. The supreme law of the land, our Constitution, towers over our Founding Fathers. It surely must tower over our current president.

