

Enumerated powers should limit the federal government

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By [Randy W. Bright](#)

This past Saturday I attended an event held by former Senator Randy Brogdon. Since the loss of his campaign for governor, Brogdon has not shrunk away from his closely held beliefs regarding God and government, and whose mission is to restore federalism to America.

His website, restorelibertyok.com explains it well: "Federalism (state sovereignty) has been all but abandoned as our system of government today." Quoting Federalist No. 45, "The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite..."

Brogdon and two other speakers, Mark Irwin of Lahoma, Oklahoma, and State Representative and Pastor Dan Fisher, explained how since our country's formation, we slipped from a federalist form of government, in which each state held their own sovereign government, to the behemoth federal government we have today.

Grasping what they were explaining was not difficult at all. Though most of us were not taught the Constitution and the Bill of Rights from the aspect of state sovereignty, enough people have discussed it to the point most conservatives already know about state's rights. (Liberals are far behind.)

While the federal government might recognize state's rights, and even may pay it lip service, it does little to actually observe it. What is difficult to understand is why we have allowed it not only to take place, but to even accept it as normal.

The enumerated powers given to the U.S. Congress is included in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. The Tenth Amendment makes it clear what the federal government can do: "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."

In other words, the federal government is allowed to do the items included in the enumerated powers, but no others.

Briefly, here are the 17 enumerated powers, which include the ability to tax to support our military; to borrow money; to regulate commerce with foreign countries, between states, and with Indian tribes; to regulate immigration and bankruptcies; to print money and to punish counterfeiters; to establish post offices; to issue patents; to constitute tribunals inferior to the U.S. Supreme Court; to punish pirates and felons committing crimes on the high seas; to declare war; to raise armies and a navy; to regulate the military; to protect the country with the same; to train the military; to govern the District of Columbia; and to make laws providing for all of these.

What we find today is nothing even resembling state's rights. As Dan Fisher discussed in his presentation, there is not much point in states having their own legislature if, after the passage of a state law, the U.S. Supreme Court will simply declare a state law null and void by edict.

A recent example is the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that nullified Oklahoma's legally passed legislation defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

The futility of passing state laws that respect state sovereignty is exemplified by the law that the Oklahoma Legislature passed (largely due to Randy Brogdon's efforts) that declared the federal Real ID law null and void in Oklahoma. Now that the federal government is pursuing the Real ID act again, Oklahoma legislators seem resigned to defeat and are unwilling to stand up and defend our law.

The ultimate point of the presenters of this event was that Americans should accept the original intent of the Constitution, and to change their way of thinking back to how people thought in the beginning: that America is a union of states, and that each state is an independent country. The evidence of this is undeniable, as each state has its own Constitution.

But this is not how most Americans see their states. They see us as a single nation or country, not a union of states that are able to pass their own laws and conduct business as they see fit, limited only by the enumerated powers given to the federal government.

In the beginning, the federal government was intended to be very small, not the massive bureaucracy it is today.

I hope that Randy Brogdon will continue to conduct these presentations (called the Liberty Bootcamp), and that if you get an opportunity to attend, please find the time to do so. Go to restorelibertyok.com to contact Randy Brogdon to find out when the next presentation will be.



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