

POWER TO THE STATES

Echoing Nietzsche's famous proclamation, several states are now declaring, in effect, "Federalism is dead." For Americans, whose nation was founded on a belief in separate spheres of government power, this pronouncement may appear equally blasphemous. Unlike Nietzsche, though, these states believe in resurrection and hope to revive the once-sacred concept that is becoming increasingly obsolete. In legislatures across the country, state representatives have introduced bills demanding

Representatives became the first legislative body to pass just such a resolution. The immensely popular House Joint Resolution 1003 won by a margin of 83 to 13 and states "that the State of Oklahoma hereby claims sovereignty under the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States over all powers not otherwise enumerated and granted to the federal government by the Constitution of the United States." Some analysts predict that approximately 20 other states will introduce similar measures over the next year.

I guess the situation is pretty abysmal when states feel compelled to say: "Umm, excuse me, Mr. President. Sorry to bother you. Just wanted to let you know that there's still a large and important sphere of power that you can't enter. No, really, there is! Please

don't laugh. It says so right here." These proposals come on the heels of the President's \$1 trillion economic stimulus package, which requires states to use the money for policy initiatives approved by the federal government. A particularly troublesome provision in the stimulus package creates a significant change in state unemployment requirements and repeals many of the welfare reform measures established in the 1990s. States fear that, once in place, these changes will remain years after the recession ends and after federal funding dries up. At that point, the provisions would fall under the even less popular category of unfunded mandates, which do exactly what the name suggests — they force the states to imple-

ment certain federal policies without providing the requisite funding.

This criticism applies to Republicans and Democrats alike. In fact, a recent focal point of critics' ire was the No Child Left Behind Act, pushed through by the Bush administration. More importantly, federal spending ballooned to new heights over the last eight years, and undoubtedly the failure to tame the Leviathan that is the U.S. federal government can be attributed to both political parties.

Now it is clear that President Obama's unprecedented \$3.55 trillion budget proposal promises more of the same. Much more. Of course, the economy is not the only area in which the federal government asserted the newfound authority that magically appeared in the latter half of the twentieth century. Far from it. Through strained readings of the Commerce Clause and other constitutional provisions, the U.S. government was able to justify new intrusions into every realm of American life.

Proponents of "big government" often rely on the increasingly popular argument in constitutional debates that the times they are a-changin', and as a "living" document, the Constitution stands for something completely different today than what it stood for in 1787. For anyone subscribing to the latter view, the following sentences will appear comically outdated: "The powers delegated to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the state governments are numerous and indefinite."

James Madison uttered those words many decades ago, but I would argue that they hold no less relevance today. Indeed, his

conception of federalism deserves even greater attention in a society that requires legislation from the states to remind the federal government that the Tenth Amendment still exists.

The important question now is whether the burgeoning reform measures will have any impact whatsoever. If history has any predictive value, the federal government will ignore this movement and continue to grow unabated. Given the popularity of these measures, though, it is not too far-fetched to think that three-quarters of the states will join together in opposing the expansion of the federal government. At that point, they would have enough power to amend the Constitution. But what would that amendment say — "Please, please, please take the rest of the Constitution seriously?"

If it does get to that point, you can expect to hear a few brazen dissidents begin to throw around the "s" word, which, as it just so happens, rhymes with "recession." The media will dismiss these individuals as radicals and fear-mongers, and admittedly, such a suggestion is better suited as a wake-up call than an actual policy proposal. But ask yourself: Is it really that radical to oppose a government regime which has no practical limits on its power and no longer concerns itself with the one document that purports to create such limits? Maybe it is. The Framers, after all, were a radical bunch.

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that the federal government abide by a frequently overlooked Constitutional provision: the Tenth Amendment.

The Tenth Amendment reads: "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."

Receiving shockingly little attention by mainstream media, at least 11 states have introduced legislation specifically demanding that the federal government live up to the dictates of this language: Arizona, Hawaii, Montana, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Washington, Georgia, South Carolina and Texas. On Feb. 18, the Oklahoma House of

We Need More D.J.

A few weeks ago I went to a party. Actually, this is highly newsworthy all in itself and I half-expect it to be panelized and editorialized. No, I jest, I jest. Seriously though, I was at a party. Proved all the naysayers wrong, didn't I?

This was a pretty typical college party: slippery dance floor, frat boys who don't know how to drink, and girls who don't recognize me from this primo column space and therefore react negatively when I ask them what they think of my column. Oh, and of course there was a D.J., to spin the hottest tunes.

Anyway, some girl actually did recognize me and wanted to dance. So we danced, damnit. And sometime between tripping over drunk frat boys (seriously, your three years of shotgunning beers and spilling half of them don't hold a candle to my three years of drinking by myself in the middle of the night, under my table. You pass out because your BAC is too high and your nervous system shuts down? I fall asleep because I get tired of drinking beer for hours on end) and her going to the bathroom to freshen up I got the idea that things were actually going great.

That is, until she told me that she wanted to go dance with the D.J. She said it in such a way that made it sound like I would regret not dancing with

the D.J. for the rest of my life. I simply had to dance with this D.J., as if it were imperative to my success as a human being. "You HAVE to dance with this D.J.," she said. I explained to her that I wasn't into dancing with some other dude, no matter how eclectic his musical selection is. Unfortunately, the D.J. was spinning the tunes too loud, too fast, and all she probably heard was "AWESOME IDEA," because her next move was to drag me across the dance floor to the table where the D.J. had set up his laptop and was doing his thing. Then she got on his table and started flailing around wildly while motioning for me to get up there with her. I realized that this was what she meant by dancing with the D.J. I also realized that she was pretty drunk. By this point I had already been at the party for at least ten minutes, which is way longer than I typically stay for, so I figured it was as good a time as any to head home and drink some beer under my table.

I also decided never to go to another party again, just in case another D.J. shows up. But later that week I went to a University-sponsored dinner where I spotted the D.J. again. I could not escape him. There were also some guard rails set up around the D.J. table. Whether they were supposed to direct the

line or to guard the D.J. from would-be dancers, I do not know. But some questions started to run through my head. Why was this guy playing music at a dinner? Does someone have to invite him or does he just decide where the music needs to be and then brings it there? Were we actually paying him? And — most importantly — what is it that a D.J. does exactly, besides making iTunes playlists and battling other D.J.s? Is it now illegal to play music at an official event without a D.J. present? I mean, someone has to hit the play button, right? Otherwise it might get out of hand and a little rowdy.

You know, I'm actually spinning some hot tracks (read: Led Zep) on my decks (read: three year-old laptop with four keys missing) as I write this. Am I a D.J.? Of course not, that's ridiculous. But if I were to play a rap song by Jay-Z and a Beatles classic at the same time, would I be a D.J.? No. I would be an artist. I would have created a "mashup" (which is actually short for "masterpiece"). This is because when you take two good songs and play them at the same time with a time delay, you've actually made a song twice as good and completely out of key.

How are we to get away from

people who call themselves "D.J. Overdrive" and "RJD2" when the Cornell Concert Commission does us the great favor of bringing them to our campus? And why should we distance ourselves from D.J.s?

Having trouble finding a convocation speaker? We don't



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That Really Grinds My Gears

need one, just get us a convocation D.J. Faculty retiring too fast and not enough money in the budget to get new professors? Find out what D.J. SoundByte is doing next semester. Actually, maybe you should just fire someone from the college's stable of D.J.s. And if there's no D.J. currently present wherever you're reading this, you should take the matter into your own hands and become one by turning your volume up. Trust me, everybody loves a D.J.

Look, I'm not bemoaning the fall of MTV or a lack of good music these days. First, I don't really like music that much anyway. Second, this isn't the Arts section. I'm just confused by this musical obsession which has

penetrated every facet of campus life. I'm just scared of people who think their favorite D.J. is a reflection of their personality. It's gotten to a point where we need a D.J. to play music for us, otherwise it's not authentic enough. It's gotten to a point where Ivy League boys think

they can rap and that being a producer is a viable career. It's gotten to a point where I'm writing a column about Ludacris and GZA instead of the economy and the Gaza strip. It's gotten to a point where we're getting some guy named "Girl Talk" to come to our University and play music other people made on his laptop instead of inviting B.B. King back for Slope Day. All I'm saying is maybe we don't need a D.J. at every event, lest we become Ithaca College.

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