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The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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“to provide for the . . . general welfare of the United States”

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Our Founding Fathers fought the Revolutionary War to free us from a government that controlled our lives. They created the United States of America with a Constitution granting specific, limited powers to the government, guaranteeing that “We the people” controlled the government. So how does Congress regularly circumvent the Constitution, expanding their power without “We the people” consenting? Remember, our Constitution begins with “We the people,” not “We the Congress.”

Congress deceptively takes power from “We the People,” knowingly interpreting the Constitution differently than the Founding Fathers intended. And how do they justify this? Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution enumerates the limited powers of Congress, beginning with an overview of their role which contains the phrase “to provide for the...general welfare of the United States.”

Congress falsely claims this phrase is one of the specific enumerated powers granted it, using it to justify nearly all they do by contending whatever they do is for the “general welfare of the United States.”

But is that what the Founding Fathers intended? Reading Section 8, along with the writings of the Founding Fathers and others of the times, allows us to understand that this phrase was simply part of the overview of the enumerated powers, not a specific power.

What are the limited powers the Founding Fathers granted Congress to fulfill their mandate “to provide for

the...general welfare of the United States?”

Congress can lay and collect taxes, borrow money, regulate commerce with foreign countries, create laws for naturalization and bankruptcies, coin money, punish counterfeiters, establish post offices, promote the arts and sciences, constitute tribunals, punish piracy on the high seas, declare war, provide an army and navy, and oversee the District of Columbia. That’s it, nothing more.

Congress ignores these limitations, instead claiming the power to do anything they deem needed to “provide for the ...general welfare of the United States.” And they do this without the permission of “We the people.”

Rather than wanting Congress to have unlimited power, the Founding Fathers demanded the opposite, as pointed out by James Madison in 1792 when he warned of this distortion of the Constitution saying, “If Congress can do whatever in their discretion can be done by money, and will promote the ‘general welfare,’ the government is no longer a limited one, possessing enumerated powers, but an indefinite one, subject to particular exceptions.”

But, the Founding Fathers did create a way to change the Constitution. Article V defines the mechanism to amend it, the only legal way to alter the power of Congress.

But, to the dismay of Congress, the Founding Fathers made it difficult to amend the Constitution, requiring two-thirds of both Houses to approve an amendment, followed by three-

fourths of the states ratifying the amendment. And why so difficult? To prevent the government from expanding their powers without getting the permission of “We the people.”

And, the 16th Amendment, ratified in 1913, shows that Congress at one time understood their powers were limited. This amendment, which clarifies the ability of Congress to levy and collect income taxes, is certainly for the “general welfare” of the country. But the 1913 Congress understood this catch all phrase was not one of their enumerated powers. If it was, they could have passed a law without the necessity of this amendment claiming, as they now do, it was for the “general welfare.”

Thomas Jefferson accurately defined the constitutional role of Congress saying, “Congress has not unlimited powers to provide for the ‘general welfare,’ but only those specifically enumerated.”

Congress has illegally distorted the Constitution to say, “Congress has the power to do whatever they deem necessary to provide for the ‘general welfare of the United States’ along with the power to define what that means.”

Does the Constitution begin with “We the people” or “We the Congress?” Are we ruled by “We the people” or by “We the Congress?”