was not because they were opposed to individual liberty. They found an alternative form of providing that particular liberty in the structure of government that we have.

One of the unwritten foundations of our system of government and the Constitution is the concept of federalism. We eventually did add a Bill of Rights, which is misnamed. It actually should be called a ''bill of wrongs.'' It is a list of things that are wrong for the government to do no matter how many people want to do it.

But in addition to that, the Founding Fathers instilled within them a system of structure to preserve those same individual liberties. They realized that increasing the number of competitors of power is more significant than increasing the number of prohibitions listed. And what Madison said in his Federalist Papers about ambition counteracting ambition, they recognized very clearly as they established a system of government that had a horizontal separation of powers between the three branches of government but equally important to them was a vertical separation of powers between the national government and States, and the sole purpose of that structure was to preserve individual liberty.

The Federal Government has its role and function. There are certain things the Federal Government does. Well, what we bring to the table as the Federal Government is uniformity, which sometimes is a necessary need. If, indeed, uniformity is important, it is the Federal Government that can preempt States. But on the other hand, our States also bring something to the issue of governance. It is a State that can be innovative.

In one of these dissenting opinions in the 1920s, Justice Brandeis, and I will paraphrase, simply called the States the great laboratory of America where experimentation could be made without actually harming the entire country, where, indeed, creativity takes place. It is the States where justice can be maintained because there are mitigating circumstances in the lives of the individuals who make up this great Nation; and when you have a system that is uniform of one-size-fits-all, it cannot take account of all those mitigating circumstances. And, indeed, in having uniformity, we often harm people in the process of doing that.

The Federal Government is not vicious. It does not intend to do harm. But its very design of one-size-fits-all means that individual needs cannot be met and only State and local government can do that.

Our goal as the Congress should not be to create a more efficient government, a kinder and gentler way of controlling people. Our goal as the Federal Government should be to do less, to move the decisions of power from this city back to States and localities where creativity, where justice, where innovation can actually take place. If we do so, if we move those decision centers, we ennoble the spirit of this country. We empower people to solve their own problems in creative ways, and we may even learn something in the process.

In so doing, I am very grateful that the gentleman from New Jersey, who will be speaking in a minute to you, Representative GARRETT of New Jersey, has initiated a 10th Amendment Caucus aimed at trying to once again bring back those principles so we clearly understand this important lesson, the structural need that the Founding Fathers put into our system of government.

The 10th amendment, the last of the Bill of Rights, is still there. It clearly states: ''The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution . . . are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.''

If we, indeed, learn that lesson, what I hope will be happening through this effort, spearheaded by Congressman GARRETT, will be an effort to illustrate, as time goes on, how the overhelpful hand of the Federal Government can actually harm people, not intentionally, but unintentionally actually harm people. We hope, as time goes on, to bring specific initiatives which will help this country reach the goal the Founding Fathers had of providing personal liberty by a strong balance of power between the national and State levels. For if Congress is willing to lose that power, the people will gain personal liberties in the process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

INTRODUCING THE CONGRESSIONAL CONSTITUTION CAUCUS' WEEKLY CONSTITUTION HOUR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I come here today to announce what we begin as hopefully a regular occurrence here on the House floor. Members of the Congressional Constitution Caucus will use these opportunities to highlight for our colleagues and for the Nation the need, justification, and plan to ensure that our government is operating consistently with our Founding Fathers' intent, and that is limited, leaving most authority over domestic issues to the States, local governments, and the people themselves.

As the founder of this caucus, a caucus dedicated to the adherence of the 10th amendment, I strongly believe that this body must begin to be more squarely focused on these important constitutional principles that we have already heard tonight.

Before I begin, let me express my sincere gratitude to my friend from Utah, who has volunteered to lead this effort here on the floor, this important education effort, but has also been a consistent and long-time champion of the notion of a limited and effective and efficient Federal Government. He routinely fights to ensure that his home State and the other States as well are entrusted with the authority and oversight promised to them as each was admitted to this Union.

I look forward to working with the other members of the caucus, as well, who share the sentiment that our Federal Government has taken far too much authority over programs that State governments have traditionally been much more effective in administering. And I invite my other colleagues to join with us.

This is really as old as our Nation itself. Our founders were very clear when establishing our system of government. They intended to set up a republic of sovereign States capable of self-governing, with a small, central government with clearly defined and limited powers.

Only the powers specifically limited and set out in the Constitution are to be administered by the Federal Government. All others are to be left to the States, local governments, or to the people themselves.

Dividing sovereignty between the Federal Government and those of the States and localities prevents an unhealthy concentration of power at any one level of government, and this is something that James Madison in The Federalist No. 51 wrote is a ''double security'' for the people.

Unfortunately, throughout the last few generations in particular, the intent of the 10th amendment, that of a limited and efficient central government, has basically melted away. There are those who support a bigger, more centralized government. They believe that a government-run bureaucracy can make the best decisions for the American people. They believe the good is in higher taxes. Well, sir, I strongly disagree. As a Member of the House Budget Committee, I am very much aware of where this leads our government, an overbloated Federal Government, consumed by deficits of over $400 billion that delivers sub-par public service.

Congress on almost a daily basis allows our government to grow, to push us further into debt and to take away from the limits imposed on the historic day when the Constitution was first ratified. What every Member of Congress needs to ask themselves each time they slide their card into one of these spots and votes, they must ask, does the bill I am voting on violate the U.S. Constitution? Does it take away the rights promised to our constituents and put them in the hands of the bureaucracy here in D.C. instead?

Mr. Speaker, I remind this body, the Constitution does not only protect the rights of the people, it also protects the rights of the States. This is our responsibility, to remember them when we write, debate and vote on legislation here in this Chamber.

What I am urging here is not only a political philosophy that most would argue has drifted from the mainstream, but a most important one that has affected our budget, and a gloomy budget forecast it has been for the future.

This is what the caucus is about, these weekly information sessions. It is really well past time that we turn a critical eye on to the Federal Government. This will be how we will lower our deficit, grow our economy and ensure that America remains that ''beacon on the Hill.''

Now, aside from being informational, this caucus also seeks to make specific legislative gains in the name of governmental efficiency and constitutional adherence. We will support legislation that seeks to return power and authority back to where it belongs, to the States, to the local governments and to the people.

So, to close, I look forward to working with my friend from Utah and other members of this caucus and other Members of this body, from both sides of the aisle, as we work each week in the days and weeks ahead. We owe nothing less to our constituents and to generations, both past and future, to defend this great experiment of American republicanism and democracy.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CAMPBELL of California). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. VAN HOLLEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the Official Truth Squad tonight is going to continue the theme that has already been addressed by three of our friends, Mr. OTTER from Idaho, Mr. BISHOP from Utah and Mr. GARRETT from New Jersey. They have been talking about our history. They have been talking about the philosophy of America and who we are and what we are and what we stand for. So for the next few minutes we will be discussing our history, the American Revolution, the people who lived before us, what they thought, what they wrote, and what they said.

I have with me tonight my friend from Texas, another freshman, Mr. CONAWAY from West Texas, and he is going to start out discussing our heritage and giving us some truth about who we are, what we are, and what we stand for.

Mr. CONAWAY. Judge, I thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to share this hour with you tonight and to be able to discuss these very important topics with our colleagues in the House.

One of the things that occurred to me while I have been here in Congress is that we don't do a real good job of delineating between the role of the Federal Government and everybody else. There is a great push every single day while we are here to expand the reach, to expand the scope, to expand the Federal Government's role in all of our lives. One of the reasons for that is I don't think we have a really good, clear appreciation for our founding documents.

So I have introduced a bill, H. Res. 485, called the America Act, a modest effort to reinstitute the Constitution in America, which would require every Member of Congress, every Representative, every Senator, to read the Constitution once a year. It would also require our senior staffers to also read the Constitution, because an awful lot of what you and I do every single day is somewhat influenced by what our staff does; the idea being that you and I raise our hand in January of every odd-numbered year, one of the seminal moments of my short term here in this Congress in January of 2005 when we stood up to take our oath of office. We pledge to protect and defend the Constitution. In our role as lawmakers, we write laws to implement the Constitution, and, every once in a while, we attempt to change the Constitution.

So it seems pretty self-evident to me we should know what is in the Constitution, and, given the reach of this Federal Government over the years, it seems we may have lost our way with respect to that.

When the Constitution was being written 230-plus years ago, there was a constant struggle or tension, as has already been discussed on this floor tonight, of what the role of the Federal Government should and should not be. Those headed up by Alexander Hamilton thought a wide-ranging, wide-reaching government would be appropriate. Others, such as Adams and Jefferson, thought a much more narrow interpretation of the Constitution would narrow the scope of this Federal Government.

I doubt that if our Founding Fathers could join us today, that even the strongest proponents of the most expansive Federal Government would recognize what we have done under the Constitution with this Federal Government. It reaches into every single portion of our lives.

You and I also, when we campaign and when we are talking on this Hill, talk about reducing the size of government, reducing Federal spending, the threat that the growth in spending has to our way of life.

The real solution, in my mind, is going to lead to some hard decisions that sweep major programs, major perhaps Cabinet-level agencies, out of the Federal Government; a clear recognition that this Federal Government should be limited; that there should be certain things that are totally left up to the States. I am not going to name any of those tonight, because that is going to create some controversy when we begin to talk about that.

The truth of the matter is if we are, in fact, going to rein in the growth of the Federal Government, we have to begin limiting the reach into particular areas that our Founding Fathers did not envision. So a modest step, a new effort to try to help each of us understand clearer what our role should be and what this Federal Government's role should be in our day-to-day lives, will be a reading of the Constitution.

So I am going to begin asking each of my colleagues to cosponsor and join this effort to pass this resolution that would require all of us to read the Constitution once a year. It is going to be an honor system. We are honorable men and women in this body, and I think we can trust ourselves.

I am a CPA by trade. You are an attorney. Our professions all require continuing professional education: doctors, lawyers, engineers, CPAs. CPAs in particular have to have 40 hours a year of continuing education just to stay current.

It seems to me that politicians and folks serving this body should be as well informed about their job as anybody serving in a profession should be informed, and the start of that would be the Constitution, the base document on which this great hall is founded.

So this requirement would require each of us to read that Constitution once a year, and record that in our records, and be available for constituents to ask us, now, when is the last time you read the Constitution, Mr. Congressman?

I want to thank my good colleague from Texas, the great judge from the southeast part of the State. We are from the same State, but we are probably 600 miles apart in our homes. But it is a wonderful State to represent,