



THE FIRST STATEMENT OF CONSERVATIVE PRINCIPLES

"The Constitution, which at any time exists 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all." --George Washington

The election of a "community organizer" and ideological Socialist, [Barack Hussein Obama](#), came with some unintended consequence for Obama and his Leftist cadres. Chief among those is the resurgence of grassroots conservative concern for the [Rule of Law](#) and a battle to restore the [First Principles](#) upon which our nation was founded.



The Resurrection of First Principles

And not a moment too soon.

In the two years since Obama's election, the ranks of politically active Patriots have swelled through conservative recruiting channels such as the [Tea Party movement](#), whose growth has been entirely grassroots, despite the best (or worst?) efforts of Beltway Republican establishment types to co-opt and brand the movement. Fortunately, Patriots have shown remarkable resilience against those golden-tongued powers of persuasion.

I, for one, welcome every American to the front lines in defense of our Constitution, but I also know that there will be many efforts to assign these Patriots into one political camp or the other.

One of the strengths of the Tea Party movement, its lack of central organization, can also be one of its greatest weaknesses. If the movement fails to unite ideologically behind the restoration of constitutional integrity and the Rule of Law, it risks devolving into a plethora of special interest constituencies which will be easily defeated or have no more power than the para-political organizations that vie for their sentiments.

As Benjamin Franklin said famously when signing the Declaration of Independence, "We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we will all hang separately."

And we derive great strength and unity in forming this front to defend our Constitution as the primary objective of the growing Patriot movement. I know from our nation's history, and from personal experience, that the only guiding authority that Patriots need is the plain language of the Constitution itself.

Back in 1996, a small group of Patriots deeply devoted to our Constitution, which we had pledged "[to support and defend](#)," endeavored to challenge the Leftmedia's stranglehold on public opinion, particularly as it pertained to the role of government and promotion of Leftist policies.

To provide sustenance for those endeavoring to restore our Constitution's rightful standing as the Supreme Rule of Law of the United States, we established *The Federalist*, an online grassroots journal providing constitutionally conservative analysis of news, policy and opinion, with the express mission of "advocating Essential Liberty, the restoration of constitutional limits on government and the judiciary, and the promotion of free enterprise, national defense and traditional American values."

Our objective was, and remains, "to provide Patriots across our nation with a touchstone of First Principles."

Demand for *The Federalist* grew rapidly, to put it mildly. A few years later, we adopted the name [The Patriot Post](#) in keeping with the growing constituency we serve.

Now, I certainly do not suggest that we were the only folks back in '96 advocating for the restoration of constitutional Rule of Law. We took our inspiration from, and owe our success to, [President Ronald Reagan](#) and his Patriot team, many of whom were our earliest promoters and supporters. They sparked the flame to revitalize our Constitution's legal standing some two decades earlier, at the juncture of our nation's bicentennial.

We also owe a great debt to conservative protagonists such as National Review founder William F. Buckley Jr., and the Heritage Foundation's Edwin J. Feulner, both of whom provided meaningful guidance and assistance to get us under way.

Of course, I'd be remiss if I failed also to credit Albert Arnold Gore, who "took the initiative in creating the Internet" for us, and then galvanized those of us interested in national sovereignty in opposition to his utopian scheme to socialize the world economy, ostensibly to thwart "global warming."

I believe the most important factor in our success has been our steadfast commitment to the Rule of Law, the supremacy of our national Constitution in all matters pertaining to the role and authority of our central government, and our analysis of the same.

We have endeavored to keep our eye on the prize, and we've thus avoided being co-opted by any political party or organization.

That will be the challenge for the independent Tea Party Patriots and other conservative movements -- to keep their eyes firmly affixed on the task of restoring our Constitution and its prescription for Rule of Law,

and to avoid the risk of being swallowed up by large, centralized poli-wonks.

Last week, my friend Ed Feulner, and many other colleagues, released "[The Mount Vernon Statement](#)," a document similar in substance to the "[Sharon Statement](#)" released in 1960 by a group of conservative intellectuals including Bill Buckley, M. Stanton Evans and Annette Kirk (widow of influential American conservative Russell Kirk).

Feulner and his staff at the Heritage Foundation have been uniformly resolute in their support for constitutional Rule of Law.

Ten years ago, I met with key staff members of the Heritage Foundation and encouraged them to adopt the practice of posting, in the introductory abstract of their papers, the specific constitutional authority for every policy position they advocate. Two years ago, Heritage launched their massive First Principles initiative, with the objective of asserting constitutional authority as the centerpiece of their mission.

While I applaud the entire Heritage team for their First Principles endeavor, I note that some of the principal signatories of the Mount Vernon Statement, though "conservative" by label, do not meet *The Patriot* standard of reliance upon the plain language of our Constitution, nor are many of those signatories representative of the "grassroots" movement they seek to unify around this statement.

With that in mind, I reiterate that any real movement to restore the integrity of our Constitution must be bottom-up, not top-down. Patriots need only subscribe to one mission statement, the *first* statement of conservative principles, *our Constitution*.

The GOP establishment squandered its opportunity to reassert First Principles when it held majorities under George W. Bush, and the party will have to demonstrate an authentic commitment to those principles if it is to gain the trust of a single American Patriot.

Real constitutional reform will come about only when Patriots across the nation demand the restoration of [Essential Liberty](#) as "endowed by their Creator," and they widely articulate the difference between Rule of Law and rule of men.

If you have taken an oath to support and defend our Constitution, I invite you to [revisit that venerable document](#) and ask you to [reaffirm your oath](#).

If you have not affirmed that commitment, I invite you to [gain a full understanding of our Constitution](#) and then [take your oath](#) -- and abide by it to your last breath, just as our Founding Fathers mutually pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.

In the words of George Washington, "Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation deserts the oaths...?"