



Lesson 10: Party Above Principle – The Rise of Partisan Politics and the Erosion of State Sovereignty

https://media.blubrry.com/jbs_freedom_is_the_cure/jbs.org/assets/podcast/masa/JBS-MASA-10.mp3

Podcast: [Play in new window](#) | [Download](#)

Introduction

The Founders designed the Senate to preserve the sovereignty of the states and to keep the federal government in check. However, the ratification of the 17th Amendment, driven by the rise of party politics, severed the direct connection between state legislatures and their representatives in Congress. This lesson explores the dangers of placing party loyalty above constitutional principles and the impact it has had on state sovereignty and the functioning of the Republic.

Key Concepts:

The Founders' Intent for the Senate:

- The Senate was originally created to represent the states and protect their sovereignty within the federal government.
- Senators were chosen by state legislatures, ensuring that the states had a direct hand in guiding national policy and keeping the federal government in check.

The Rise of Party Politics:

- James Madison warned of the dangers of factions (parties) in *The Federalist*, No. 10, describing them as a “mortal disease” that had destroyed every popular government in history.
- Over time, political parties have shifted the focus away from state sovereignty to party loyalty, undermining the original purpose of the Senate.

The 17th Amendment and Its Consequences:

- The 17th Amendment, which established the direct election of Senators, was a result of increasing party influence and the desire to nationalize politics.
- This amendment cut the cord that once bound Congress to the state legislatures, diminishing the states' ability to control their federal representatives.

The Impact of Party Over Principle:

- Today, the party affiliation of Senators often takes precedence over their duty to represent their states.
- Senators are more likely to prioritize the interests of their party and national party platforms than the needs and sovereignty of their states.
- Even those Senators who champion liberty and the Constitution often do so from a partisan perspective, further entrenching party loyalty over constitutional fidelity.

The Corrupting Influence of PACs and Special Interests:

- Political Action Committees (PACs) and special interest groups have a powerful influence over lawmakers, using financial contributions to sway legislation and policy.
- As long as Congress continues to assume power over every aspect of life, these groups will continue to

The John Birch Society

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: October 8, 2024



pour money into federal elections, further corrupting the political process.

- The solution lies in states reasserting their sovereignty by nullifying unconstitutional federal actions, which would reduce the influence of PACs and special interests by limiting the federal government's power.

The Importance of Electing Principled Leaders:

- The success of restoring state sovereignty and constitutional governance depends on electing leaders who prioritize principle over party.
- Citizens must actively seek out and support candidates who reject the allure of party favors, special interest money, and who are committed to upholding the Constitution.
- These leaders must be willing to stand against their own party when it violates constitutional principles and to act in the best interest of their state and its citizens.

The Need for Courage and Determination:

- The fight to restore the Republic and reclaim state sovereignty requires courage, determination, and a steadfast commitment to constitutional principles.
- If citizens and lawmakers continue to allow parties and PACs to dominate the political landscape, the Republic will continue to erode, leading to a consolidated national government with unchecked power.

The Role of Nullification in Protecting State Sovereignty:

- Nullification remains a powerful tool for states to resist federal overreach and protect their sovereignty.
- More state legislatures must recognize the constitutional foundation of nullification and be willing to use it to challenge unconstitutional federal actions.
- By doing so, states can reclaim their rightful place in the federal system and restore the balance of power envisioned by the Founders.

Conclusion

The rise of party politics has shifted the focus of Senators and lawmakers away from their duty to represent their states and uphold the Constitution. The ratification of the 17th Amendment and the influence of PACs and special interests have further eroded state sovereignty. To restore the Republic, citizens must elect principled leaders who prioritize the Constitution over party and use the power of nullification to resist federal overreach. Only by returning to these foundational principles can we preserve the sovereignty of the states and protect the liberties of the people.