

WALTER WILLIAMS: Ragin' Cajuns revive the 10th Amendment

Last place in the Bill of Rights

Reading an article in this April's *Chronicles* magazine, "Cajuns Uncaged," made my day.

Last October, by nearly a 60 percent majority, Louisianans approved Amendment 1 to their state constitution. Amendment 1 declares: "The people of this state have the sole and exclusive right of governing themselves as a free and sovereign state; and do, and forever hereafter shall, exercise and enjoy every power, jurisdiction, and right pertaining thereto, which is not, or may not hereafter be, by them expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled."

Louisiana's amendment would be entirely unnecessary if the White House, Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court didn't have disdain for the U.S. Constitution. What the citizens of Louisiana seek is already part of the protections found in our Constitution. The Ninth Amendment reads, "The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." The 10th 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."

Both the Ninth and 10th Amendments are held in the deepest contempt and disrespect by the White House, Congress and the Supreme Court. Why? Because these Amendments, were written to protect against consolidation of power by the federal government. Dismissal of the Ninth and 10th Amendments allows Congress to control our schools, mandate speed limits, and require employment and college admissions quotas, as well as other forms of Washington tyranny. Today, little states can do nothing without Washington's permission. That was not the Framers' vision.

What would Williams do if he were Louisiana governor with such a mandate from the people? I would write Congress, stating that Louisiana citizens are reclaiming their rights

guaranteed by the Constitution. Respecting the Constitution and disobeying Congress would surely invite retaliation. Congress might threaten to cut off Medicaid reimbursements and highway-construction funds if Louisiana didn't follow their dictates.

Faced with congressional threats, I would go to the state legislature to establish a law enabling the state treasurer to establish a federal tax escrow account. All Louisiana citizens and businesses with federal tax obligations would be required by law to make those payments to Louisiana's federal tax escrow account. From that account, Louisiana citizens' federal obligations (income, profit and excise taxes) would periodically be sent to Washington.

Then I'd send Congress another letter, informing them that if they retaliate against Louisiana citizens for obeying the Constitution by cutting off, say, \$10 billion worth of Medicaid reimbursements or highway construction funds, we're simply going to reduce by \$10 billion our periodic payments of tax obligations to Washington.

You say, "Hey, Williams, things could get pretty nasty after that!" You're right and Congress might use armed force. "Governor" Williams

would ask Louisianians just how far they are willing to go and what they're willing to sacrifice to protect those precious rights the Framers sought to guarantee by our Constitution.

You say, "Williams, have you lost your marbles, challenging a powerful federal government?" I haven't lost my marbles anymore than James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and others lost theirs. After all, in 1776 — when our Founders handed King George III the Declaration of Independence — Great Britain was the mightiest power on the face of the earth. They knew that if they lost they'd be hung as traitors.

Of course, all of this would be irrelevant if Congress, the White House and the Supreme Court followed their oaths of office to "protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

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