

Congressional War-Making Powers and Its Impact

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3 **WHEREAS** the U.S. Congress has declared war only five (5) times under its
4 constitutional power given in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution of the
5 United States of America. These wars were the War of 1812, the Mexican-American
6 War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II;

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8 **WHEREAS** going to war is the most important decision any society can make. Thus, a
9 decision of this magnitude has to be a collective one, done constitutionally;

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11 **WHEREAS** constitutionally, the U.S. Congress is the only body that can declare war,
12 and this power cannot be abrogated, nor transferred, to any other authority;

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14 **WHEREAS** since WWII, the U.S. Congress has failed to exercise its constitutional
15 responsibility and as a result has left war-making powers to the executive branch which
16 contradicts the basic reason why the founders placed war-making powers with the
17 Congress. By doing this, the U.S. Congress has failed to fulfill its responsibilities to the
18 citizens of the United States and the troops that we send into harm's way;

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20 **WHEREAS** the country, through representatives, needs to have a debate not only on
21 whether or not to go to war, but on making a commitment to support the total war
22 effort and what that might entail. Issues that need to be addressed: Who is the enemy?
23 How will we know when the war is over? Are we willing to be in a perpetual war with
24 a concept/tactic? Who will sign the peace treaty? Are we willing to raise taxes to pay
25 for it? Are we willing to reinstate the draft for both men and women? Are we willing
26 to support the needs of our veterans?;

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28 **WHEREAS** if the government declares war, there needs to be societal commitment to
29 the war effort. If this commitment is not made, we are undermining our war effort and
30 our military. Commitment to support a war should entail at a minimum the following:
31 means of financing the war, training and maintaining acceptable troop levels, supplying
32 the military with the best equipment, stating our goals and purposes for war clearly,
33 identifying and supporting veterans' needs which includes the best life-long physical
34 and psychological medical care; and

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36 **WHEREAS** in the past, wars were declared against countries; now we are facing
37 philosophies and strategies that are not government/country based. To choose to fight
38 this type of war requires a new commitment and understanding of war on the part of
39 our citizens;

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41 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic Central
42 Committee petition our U.S Congressional representatives, via a copy of this resolution,
43 to accept their Constitutional obligation to debate and make a decision as to whether or
44 not to declare war;

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46 **THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic
47 Central Committee petition the U.S. Congress, via a copy of this resolution, to provide
48 financial means of supporting any war effort by increasing government revenues that
49 would be identified as a War Tax.

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52 Submitted by the Veterans and Military Families . (Date Submitted 1/30/2016)

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54 The Resolutions Committee amended this resolution at its January 30, 2016 meeting in
55 Lynnwood, but made no recommendation on its passage.

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57 The WSDCC "PASSED" this resolution at its January 30, 2016 meeting in Lynnwood.