

R0260043-1

Statement of Congressman Scott Garrett (R-NJ)

Mr. Chairman, as you know, today is Constitution Day. On this day in 1787, delegates to the Constitutional Convention met for the last time and signed their names to the document that became our constitution.

The constitution creates a federal government of limited and enumerated powers that are entrusted to the people's representatives and every elected official to protect. Because of this, it is fitting and necessary that when we introduce or debate any legislation before this body, we recognize and cite the specific source of the powers vested in us by the Constitution that allows us to do so.

Today, I submit a proposal to do two very simple things:

1. Require the clerk of the house to read the Constitutional Authority Statement out loud when the bill is brought to the floor, along with reading the bill number and other matters.
2. Requires that the clerk verify that the Constitutional Authority Statement cite a specific article, section, and clause of the Constitution when introducing the bill, or else it must reject the bill.

Taken together, these proposals will strengthen the Constitutional Authority Statements which all Members of Congress are required to introduce any legislation.

Unfortunately, we have found that while some members take their duty to provide Constitutional Authority Statements very seriously, others have made a mockery of it. My goal here is to ensure this obligation is taken seriously by every one of my colleagues. Those who submit a questionable statement will have to hear their name mentioned, along with their poor attempt at constitutional justification, when the statement is read aloud.

For duly elected members of this body, it should not be a problem to list the article, section and clause where we derive our power from the constitution. Too many current statements make vague allusions without sighting a specific clause.