

Welcome to the March newsletter.

If you missed our latest Issue Brief on the 17th Amendment, you can read it [here](#).

A reminder to former Florida state legislators.

You are invited to join us at the **2023 Legislative Legacy Reception at the Florida Historic Capitol Museum** on Thursday, April 20. We will gather with the friends and colleagues who shared in our legislative service to Florida. Let's make new memories and share old stories at an evening filled with fellowship and fun. Guests will enjoy live music, hors d'oeuvres, and drinks in the beautiful Historic Capitol.

Thursday, April 20, 2023

5:30 PM-7:30 PM

Reception begins at 5:30 PM

Welcoming Comments and In Memoriam Toast at 6:00 PM

Reception Tickets: \$50

Register at <https://2023LegislativeLegacy.eventbrite.com> by Wednesday, April 12.

Let us know if you have any questions about the program. 850-322-6396.

Please encourage as many of your former classmates to attend as possible.

We often read and hear complaints about the efficacy of Congress; that it is broken, not doing its job, and everything in Washington is a mess. Many claim we need to fix Congress, or "drain the swamp", and that it starts with getting the right people elected.

While we all would agree electing qualified Congressional representatives is imperative, i.e. someone of honorable character who is ready, willing, and able to put country above personal ambition and avarice, the reality is that not even Superman would be able to fix the problem. We tend to put too much trust and hope in those who we elect to represent us in Congress even though our expectations are not reasonable nor justifiable.

Thus, the question, is Congress really broken or has it embarked on a self-prescribed mission that is doomed to fail because it is contrary to its granted authority and designed intention?

Actually ... both.

One could make a strong case that Congress is an abject failure handling just the limited number of enumerated responsibilities that it has been assigned.

Secondly, it is not realistic that a dictatorial type of authority can micromanage a broad range of policies within a free social order consisting of 50 very diverse states without dire consequences and potentially miserable results.

Within [Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution](#) are the limited powers and duties granted to the Congress, and upon which they are to faithfully act, such as:

- Lay and collect taxes and duties.
- Borrow money on credit of the US and pay national debts.
- Protect free interstate commerce.
- Coin money and regulate the value thereof.
- Establish and operate a viable and efficient post office.
- Create a patent office to safeguard intellectual property.
- Declare war and negotiate treaties with foreign nations.
- Raise and maintain a military force to protect our borders and provide for the common defense.

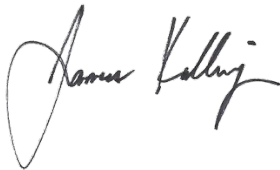
By no stretch of the imagination, a quick performance analysis makes it abundantly clear that the Congress does not score very well on almost all of these responsibilities if, in fact, they have not outright failed.

Furthermore, the few limits placed on the states is clarified in [Article 1, Section 10, U.S. Constitution](#), while all other powers are reserved to the states or people as stated in the [10th Amendment](#), thereby declaring the essence of American federalism.

Perhaps, if Congress had more respect for the balanced federalism established in the Constitution, and state legislatures were more adamant about their sovereignty over most policy matters, Congress would not be so broken and state legislatures would be even more effective in serving the will of the people that they represent.

Liberty is not the power of doing what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought.

John Dahlberg-Acton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Kallinger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James Kallinger, President
National Association of Former State Legislators