

This week, partisan games in Washington reached a fevered pitch as Congress acted to prevent recess appointments, yet the administration made them anyway. Congress has been gaveling into session for less than a minute every three days for the express purpose of technically staying in session. The 40 second "pro forma" sessions may strike supporters of the President as obstructionist, but Congress was using its clear constitutional authority and playing by the rules. Frustrated, the President simply disregarded the Constitution, and appointed Richard Cordray as head of the new Consumer Financial Protection Board, and Sharon Block, Richard Griffin, and Terence Flynn to the National Labor Relations Board anyway.

Playing fast and loose with the Constitution only gets worse with every administration. Because of the dangerous precedents being set, both parties would be wise to defend constitutional bounds, no matter who crosses the line. Defending a constitutional overstep always comes back to haunt them once power changes hands.

The Obama administration expressed extreme frustration with the Senate's refusal to confirm its nominees. The truth is, for better or worse, these are the cards the voters have dealt Washington. The Constitution, with its system of checks and balances, not only allows for gridlock, it practically guarantees some degree of it. The Founders knew that gridlock can be a very good thing. If nothing can be agreed upon in Washington, harm to the country is limited. Considering the Obama administration's ideas of what caused our problems, and how to solve them, the wisdom of the founders certainly shines through today.

According to the administration, the new Consumer Financial Protection Board is an absolute necessity. Another bureaucracy, with more rules and red tape and paperwork and procedures is supposed to protect the people from bad actors in the marketplace. On the contrary, the answer was staring us in the face in late 2008 when these bad banks and corporations threatened to go belly-up. The laws of economics were working to remove corrupt companies from the market forever, to never abuse or defraud another customer or depositor or shareholder again. Bankruptcy is the ultimate consumer protection, and what did Washington do? It protected the banks instead, and created more bureaucrats.

This is exactly why constitutionally-inflicted gridlock should be respected. But instead it is clearer than ever that we are now a nation ruled by men, not laws. This nation needs to respect the Constitution again. No exceptions. The oath of office to protect and defend the Constitution is still in effect when checks and balances get in the way of a political agenda. If not, it has no meaning at all.