

Constitution Corner #4

[Reminder that the teacher/reader will have instructions in red italics. Please distribute the two new handouts for this lesson: "Congress Has the Power to:" and "Citizenship Test". The following is your script.]

Welcome once again, great Patriot Moms and Grandmothers, to your Constitution Corner! What a world we are living in! The best thing we can do right now is -- become educated about the ONLY solution that can bring our Country back to sanity, and that solution is our Constitution!

In today's session, we will continue with ARTICLE 1, which is **the longest Article in the Constitution in which ten important Sections reside**. Today we will cover part of Section 8, the heart of Article 1.

Please pull out your Constitution Booklet, notebook, and your folder with your growing number of handouts, including those for today.

While you are doing that, we are going to take one minute and 30 seconds before each class to shout out our Constitution's basic facts!

 ***[PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING BEFORE EACH CLASS, GOING FORWARD EACH SESSION.]***

As a chorus of patriots, quickly answer these questions: ***[Let the class shout out the answers, which are in bold quotes.]***

How many Articles are in our Constitution? -- (" 7 ")

What Star Wars acronym describes all seven articles? -- ("LEJ-SA\$R")

Which Article subject does each letter in LEJ-SA\$R stand for? ***[Show Political Spectrum handout, if needed!]***

"L" stands for... ("Legislature").

"E" ... ("Executive").

"J" ("Judicial").

"S" ("States").

"A" explains the two methods of ("Amending").

"\$" stands for.... ("Supremacy Clause" and "We pay our debts").

"R" is for.... ("Ratification").

Lastly, ***[if time permits]*** please recite the Preamble with me, with or without hand motions.

Next -- In your own Pocket Constitution, turn to **Article 1 Section 8 clause 1. (1.8.1)** You have already labeled this section as "POWERS". Follow along with the new handout as we read through each power. It helps to write in the margin of your personal Constitution the name of each power as we come to it.

[Ask the class:]-- What is the very first item in Clause 1, or Power #1, given to our Congress? [To lay and collect TAXES.] To "lay" means to set up both the amount to be paid, and the system. You may recall that we almost lost the Revolutionary War because our first constitution, the Articles of Confederation, did not give the Federal Government any official power to collect taxes. George Washington's soldiers suffered terribly at Valley Forge because states could not be forced by Congress to help nor provide for the 1,000 soldiers who died by either freezing for lack of clothing and/or shelter, or by starving to death. Each state had their own special, sob-story excuse to keep state funds to themselves. But now, thanks to this clause, it would be the LAW to help provide for the federal government's needs.

However, for protection from runaway taxes, the Founders carefully set up these taxes to pay for only TWO categories -- The **Common Defense** and the **GENERAL Welfare** of the Country. The "General Welfare" meant anything that affected the Country as a whole -- not a certain state's bridge or one state's neighborhood disaster, or an individual's tragedy. (These things were to be left to state and local governments, preventing squabbles, ranking, and back room deals among the different states!) The Founder's original idea is free of controversy -- that any type of Federal tax had to be UNIFORMLY DISTRIBUTED, equal to all states, and in fact could only be used for the following *ENUMERATED* items. ("Enumerated" meant that each item was unique to this taxing process, meaning that this list of powers could not be added to.)

Clause 2 -- Congress could **borrow money** against our credit. *In 2022 -- WHAT credit?* We have surpassed the \$30 trillion dollar mark in our national DEBT. Thomas Jefferson did not like this particular Congressional power. He said, "Public debt is the greatest of all dangers to be feared." When he became President, he took the **6th Article** of the Constitution seriously. Remember that in our LEJ-SASR acronym, the 6th Article is represented by a dollar sign, meaning that we faithfully pay our debts. Andrew Jackson was the only President who insisted that Congress pay off our debts *completely*, and they did. Jefferson, while President, insisted that Congress pay off half of the Revolutionary War debt by selling bonds, taxing non-essential goods, and by selling off public lands.

We could actually do the same today, and here is how ----

The Federal government owns huge percentages of federal land in ALL of our western states. In Alaska, 61% of the land is government owned -- that percentage is the size of New Mexico. In Nevada, 85% is government owned. Oregon -- 52%, Utah -- 64%, Washington State -- 28.5%. A substantial dent might be made in our national debt by **selling off** these 640 million acres!

Clause 3 -- The notorious **COMMERCE CLAUSE** in this 4th Congressional power was meant to be used for negotiations with foreign powers, Indian Tribes, and AMONG the states, not IN the states! This clause has seriously morphed into the takeover by the Federal Government of almost all commerce inside our states, a dangerous encroachment of state's rights that we must be diligent in getting changed -- changed back to the original meaning!!! (Many of our

congressmen have not helped this cause by voting FOR the so called "Infrastructure Bill" in August 2021.)

Clause 4 -- *[Be sure class has been given the CITIZENSHIP QUESTIONS handout.]*

Congress is in charge of our **Citizenship rules**. It takes about 5 years of jumping through many hoops to become a lawful, permanent citizen of the United States. However, it takes just a few weeks for non-citizens to cross our southern border and slip illegally into our population. This is not the President's power to fix (or escalate)! This is Congress's problem. In 2022 Congress is doing nothing with this important power -- and duty.

One of the things that a non-citizen who is coming in LEGALLY must do, is to take a test on citizenship, to prove their knowledge of this Country that they long to live in. Can YOU answer the test questions that citizen-seeking persons must answer? *[Show handout.]* Take your **U.S. Citizenship Exam** home and try it for yourself, your kids, and your spouse!

WE WILL STOP HERE ON THE CONGRESSIONAL POWERS. MANY OF THE REST OF THE POWERS DEAL WITH DEFENSE, which subject has much to explore.

Here are five of the facts that we learned today. You may come up with many more!

FIVE FACTS:

1. Congress has 20 enumerated powers. Congress can do nothing extra beyond these powers.
2. Originally, Congress could only ask for taxes in the subjects of the nation's general welfare and the common defense.
3. Men seeking power have taken the words from our Constitution and have changed them for their narcissist use! Examples are found in -- "General Welfare", where the word "welfare" no longer means well-being. Also, in the Commerce Clause, the word "among" the states has become "IN" the states.
4. The United States could pay off much of its debt by selling off 640 million acres of federally owned land in the western states.
5. It is in the power of Congress to change our citizenship laws, to make it easier for a law-abiding non-citizen to become a coveted US citizen.

Are there any more facts that you learned?!

See you next time as we continue to define and explore the Powers of Congress. By the way, who in our government can declare war? Find out in our next session (or you can cheat and find it in the Constitution!)

See you next session!