

Schlafly: Paul Ryan Must Do This

Shortly after Congressman Paul Ryan was sworn in as Speaker of the House, he admitted to his colleagues: "The House is broken. We are not solving problems; we are adding to them. Neither the members nor the people are satisfied with how things are going."

If the House is really broken, as he says, then it's because of Congress' consistent failure to exercise its constitutional powers. Our fundamental document, the Constitution, Article One, Section One, begins: "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States." The rest of Article One sets forth the many powers that the framers allocated to what they thought would be the most powerful of our three branches of government.

In his first act as incoming Speaker, Ryan signed a deal that was secretly negotiated by outgoing Speaker John Boehner. A key provision of that deal was to surrender Congress' authority to "borrow money on the credit of the United States" for the remainder of President Obama's term as president. To confirm this budget deal, Ryan had to violate the so-called Hastert rule, in which Republican leaders repeatedly promised not to advance legislation that most Republicans oppose. Two-thirds of Republicans in both Houses opposed the Boehner-Obama budget deal, yet the new leadership allowed it to become law with mostly Democratic votes.

Despite strong Republican majorities sent to both Houses by the voters in last year's election, the new Congress has surrendered its basic powers over foreign trade, war and peace, immigration and naturalization, confirmation of judges and the regulation of federal courts.