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Congress Is No Longer Silent

by Congressman John Conyers 



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262 COMMENTS

Today marks the first hearing I will conduct in the Judiciary Committee since taking over as Chairman and this feels like a momentous occasion.

Our country has been run, far too long, by an Administration that seeks to rule in secrecy. The Bush White House has ignored our founding fathers' separation of powers, claiming an ever increasing scope of authority in direct conflict with the constitution.

For the past six years Congress has been silent, watching idly as its powers are usurped.

No longer.

Today we embark on a vigorous defense of our nation, reclaiming our constitution and reasserting the authority of Congress in our tripartite system of government.

Our hearing today is on presidential signing statements. So far, the Bush White House has issued nearly 150 signing statements challenging over 1,100 provisions of law.

More than all previous presidents combined.

What does this mean? We don't know. When the White House issues a signing statement indicating they do not feel bound by an Act of Congress, we don't know if they have actually acted to violate that law.

The signing statement surely indicates intent to ignore laws and contempt for Congress and the constitution, but the administration has never had to explain the extent to which it has acted upon these signing statements.

Our hearing this morning will ask these questions and convey forcefully the message from Congress that we no longer give license to the Bush White House to ignore the constitution and govern in secret.

Starting at 10:15 this morning, we will be webcasting today's hearing. Please feel free to join us here.

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