



Bill to End Obama's Libya War Attracts Bipartisan Support

On March 29, Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) introduced [legislation](#) requiring the President to “cease the use of force in, or directed at, the country of Libya” and denying him the use of federal funds to finance the war. Amash was among the first members of Congress to [declare](#) Obama's war unconstitutional, and the bill echoes his earlier sentiments, stating that Obama went to war “without the authorization of Congress”; that “Libya has not declared war or initiated hostilities against the United States or its allies”; and that the Constitution vests in Congress, not the President, the powers of declaring war and raising and regulating the armed forces. The only reasonable conclusion, therefore, is that the war is illegal and must be halted immediately.

As of this writing, Amash's bill has 11 cosponsors. Seven are Republicans: Jason Chaffetz (Utah), John Duncan (Tenn.), Christopher Gibson (N.Y.), Timothy Johnson (Ill.), Walter Jones (N.C.), Tom McClintock (Calif.), and Ron Paul (Texas). The other four, of course, are Democrats: Michael Capuano (Mass.), Marcy Kaptur (Ohio), Dennis Kucinich (Ohio), and Fortney “Pete” Stark (Calif.).

Kucinich began criticizing the war almost as soon as it had started, [calling](#) Obama's unilateral war-making “an impeachable offense,” though he doubted that impeachment proceedings would actually take place. He also [announced](#) his intention to introduce an amendment defunding the operation (Paul would cosponsor it), so it comes as no surprise that he signed on to Amash's bill the day it was introduced.

Capuano and Stark became cosponsors on March 30. Stark [called](#) Obama's war “absolutely absurd” and [said](#), “I think it's a sad day when the President goes off and bombs someone without notifying anyone and perhaps puts us into a war that has no plan, no end, no game plan, no way to suggest how we'll be out of there or when we'll be out of there.”

Stark's concern for constitutional protocol would be touching if not for the fact that it is so terribly inconsistent. This is the same Congressman, after all, who [told](#) a constituent at a town hall meeting, “The federal government ... can do most anything in this country,” regardless of the Constitution's clear restrictions on its power. The operative phrase, apparently, is “in this country.” Stark seems to believe in constitutional limits only when it comes to the federal government's activities in foreign countries.

Kaptur is the most recent Democrat to cosponsor the bill, having come on board April 1. [The Hill took note](#) of this turn of events:

In a floor speech last week, Kaptur accused the president of intentionally sidestepping Congress by waiting until recess to launch the attacks.

“I'm highly concerned that this military intervention took the familiar pattern of launching attacks just when Congress left town to go back to our districts for a week, thus silencing our voices in Congress even more, as this floor was shut down,” Kaptur said Wednesday. “How premeditated, and how irresponsible, I believe the current course of events to be.”

Kaptur did not buy the Obama administration's line that its consultation with some congressional leaders was sufficient to bless the war, saying, “None of these gestures [meets] the spirit or letter of the law under our Constitution relating to military engagement abroad.”

It is likely that more of Obama's fellow Democrats, as well as other Republicans, will join the roster of Amash's cosponsors. California Reps. Lynn Woolsey, Barbara Lee, Mike Honda, and Zoe Lofgren, for



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 6, 2011

example, are on record [opposing](#) both the war itself and the President's decision to launch it without congressional approval. The more cosponsors the bill gets, the more likely it is to get out of committee and to pass the full House of Representatives.

For Obama, this is very bad news indeed, especially since it will be impossible to portray the bill as a partisan effort. However, his administration has already quite plainly [signaled](#) its intention to ignore any congressional attempts to interfere with the war. Should Amash's bill, or even some less strident piece of legislation related to the war, pass Congress but be dismissed by the President, Kucinich's theoretical talk of impeachment just might turn into reality. And *that* would be far worse news for the man in the White House.

Photo of Obama: AP Images

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