

Our Constitution at Work

Michael Sean Winters | Mar. 16, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

So, House Speaker [John Boehner could not corral enough Republican vote](#) [1]s to pass the continuing resolution, and so avoid a government shutdown, after 54 Republicans, all of them taking marching orders from the Tea Party, refused to vote for the CR. He had to turn to the Democrats to provide the votes needed to pass the measure.

The Tea Party likes to yap about their devotion to the Constitution. Of course, this is precisely how the Constitution was designed to work, to encourage competing, and shifting, interests to avoid a tyranny of the majority. One member may vote with the Speaker on this issue, but not that issue, and so there is no ideological phalanx. So, the Tea Party, in their zeal to demonstrate their commitment to cutting spending, are in fact weakening the hand of the man who has to lead negotiations. That man, John Boehner, now knows that if the Tea Partiers won't play ball, on some issues the Democrats will. But, the Democrats too have a price for their support. We can only hope that this arrangement of the political stars will lead to moderation and bipartisan cooperation which will, in turn, leave the Tea Party brigade on the sidelines, which is where they can do the least harm.

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[1] <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0311/51372.html>