



Can Congress Seat a Member-Elect Who Vows to Destroy our Constitution?

By Benjamin Osborne

“Representatives . . . shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution.”¹

“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.”²

Introduction

The November 2026 election could produce a member-elect of the House of Representatives who belongs to an organization and adheres to an ideology that has expressly advocated destroying significant components of the existing constitutional structure and who has personally acted to seek those ends. That possibility places an unresolved question directly before the House: What does Article VI require when a member-elect must swear to “support” the Constitution while the record raises a serious question whether that oath can be undertaken without mental reservation or purpose of evasion?

The Constitution supplies the oath. Congress has supplied its words. The Supreme Court has repeatedly addressed ideological qualifications, loyalty oaths, political association, and legislative seating. But the court has never squarely decided whether the House may refuse to administer or accept the oath where a member-elect’s own statements establish that the oath would be merely pro forma. This primer addresses that question.

The immediate constitutional question may be unresolved, but the underlying problem is not new. A constitutional republic must protect political and religious liberty while also confronting the harder case of an individual who seeks the power of public office while personally committed to destroying the constitutional order that gives that office its authority. The Constitution does

¹ U.S. CONST. art. VI, cl. 3.

² 5 U.S.C. § 3331 (prescribing the oath by which federal officeholders are required to swear or affirm the Constitution).

not leave Congress free to solve that problem by inventing ideological qualifications or religious tests. This primer argues that Congress does not need to. Article VI has supplied a constitutional answer from the beginning.

The Constitutional Gap

The United States has confronted a similar problem before. In the 1950s, the threat came from the rise of the Communist Party. Congress responded with the Communist Control Act of 1954, finding that the Communist Party sought the overthrow of the U.S. government and rejected constitutional limitations on its conduct.³ At that time, Congress understood that a constitutional republic has a legitimate interest in distinguishing between those who seek change within its constitutional order and those who are committed to destroying that order.

Federal law still reflects that distinction. An applicant for naturalization may be denied citizenship for advocating the overthrow of the government by force, violence, or other unconstitutional means, and the statute separately reaches specified membership or affiliation with the Communist Party and other totalitarian organizations.⁴ Those restrictions generally apply to conduct or affiliation during the ten years preceding the naturalization application all the way through the time a person takes the citizenship oath.⁵ Federal regulations go further in describing the governing principle: Attachment to the Constitution requires a “depth of conviction which would lead to active support of the Constitution” and contemplates excluding applicants who are hostile to the United States’ basic form of government and its Constitution.⁶

Powell Created a Gap for Members of Congress

Yet constitutional law has left an extraordinary gap. The Constitution sets the qualifications for members of the House, covering age, citizenship, and place of residence, and Congress may determine whether a member meets those qualifications.⁷ Congress may demand constitutional attachment from an immigrant seeking to become an American citizen, but the Supreme Court in *Powell v. McCormack* sharply limited the House’s ability to add any additional qualifications for members outside of what is in the Constitution.⁸ Taken too broadly, that rule has produced a strange result: Federal law may prevent an otherwise eligible applicant from becoming a citizen because of specified hostility to constitutional government, yet Congress may appear powerless to prevent an elected citizen committed to destroying that constitutional order from entering the House as an elected member.

³ 50 U.S.C. § 841.

⁴ 8 U.S.C. § 1424(a)(2)–(4).

⁵ *Id.* § 1424(c).

⁶ 8 C.F.R. § 316.11(a).

⁷ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 2, cl. 2.

⁸ *Powell v. McCormack*, 395 U.S. 486, 522, 548 (1969).

That discrepancy cannot be resolved by inventing a new qualification. But Congress need not invent one. The Constitution already supplied the answer in 1787.

Article VI commands that senators and representatives “shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution.”⁹ The oath is therefore not a modern loyalty test imposed by Congress. It is part of the original Constitution. In *Powell*, the court expressly left unresolved the question of whether Article VI’s oath requirement constitutes an additional constitutional qualification.¹⁰

The Article VI Question Is Now Ripe

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has grown into the largest socialist organization in the United States and has become a growing presence in electoral politics.¹¹ Its rise has also coincided with the emergence of what the Center for Renewing America (CRA) calls the Red-Green Alliance, the growing political coalition between neo-Marxist progressives and anti-Western Muslims, each separately committed as ideologies to the demise of the American constitutional system.¹² CRA is not arguing that association with these groups is in itself a disqualification for Congress, even if that association raises constitutional red flags. Further, Article VI expressly provides that “no religious Test shall ever be required” for federal office.¹³ Based on current interpretations of the law, Congress therefore cannot exclude someone because he or she is Muslim, rejects Christianity, or holds Islamic religious beliefs. Operating from this present understanding, this primer argues that when someone elected to Congress has personally embraced the destruction of the constitutional order espoused by these groups, he or she cannot truthfully swear to support that order as a condition of taking office.

The twentieth-century cases never fully answered that question for Congress. They developed rules protecting political association from guilt by association but ignored the constitutional distortion of preventing an individual from becoming an American citizen but allowing someone born in the country but seeking its destruction to become a member of Congress. The sections that follow address this distortion in detail. If the evidence establishes that a member-elect has moved beyond association and political advocacy and has personally embraced the destruction of the constitutional republic, must the House nevertheless administer an oath to support that republic and treat its perfunctory recitation as sufficient?

⁹ U.S. CONST. art. VI, cl. 3.

¹⁰ *Powell*, 395 U.S. at 520 n.41.

¹¹ DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AM., *Democratic Socialists of America*, <https://www.dsusa.org> (last visited Oct. 2, 2026).

¹² Wade Miller, *Policy Brief: Assessing the Marxist-Muslim Alliance Aimed at America’s Heart*, CNTR. FOR RENEWING AM. (July 20, 2026), <https://americarenewing.com/issues/policy-brief-assessing-the-marxist-muslim-alliance-aimed-at-americas-heart/>.

¹³ U.S. CONST. art. VI, cl. 3.

This primer argues that it need not. The theory is novel in application but not in origin. It does not add to the Constitution. It takes seriously a requirement that has been in the Constitution from the beginning.

Given the Supreme Court's past reliance on *Powell* and its progeny in policing congressional qualifications, a House decision to enforce the Article VI oath as a constitutional requirement for membership is the best pathway, and it would almost certainly face a challenge in the courts. CRA welcomes that litigation. Excluding members for failing to satisfy the Article VI oath is the right vehicle to place the unresolved constitutional question squarely before the courts: whether Congress may enforce the Article VI oath requirement as a constitutional qualification for becoming a member of Congress.

The Article VI Oath Has Substantive Force

The Supreme Court's oath cases give the obligation substantive meaning. In *Cole v. Richardson*, the Court upheld an oath requiring a public employee to support and defend the Constitution and oppose governmental overthrow by force, violence, or unlawful means.¹⁴ *Cole* drew a relevant line: The government may not demand ideological conformity, but it may require an official to commit himself to the constitutional processes through which political change must occur.

Law Students Civil Rights Research Council v. Wadmond provides a close analogy to the congressional oath.¹⁵ New York required prospective attorneys to swear to support the federal and state constitutions before admission to the bar, and the Supreme Court permitted the state to inquire, before admission, whether an applicant could take that oath in good faith.¹⁶ That inquiry could reach whether the applicant knowingly belonged to an organization advocating the unlawful overthrow of government and specifically intended to further that objective.¹⁷ It could also ask whether the applicant could affirm his loyalty to the Constitution "without any mental reservation."¹⁸ The Court upheld the inquiry because it served the legitimate purpose of determining "the good faith with which an applicant can take the constitutional oath" and specifically observed that the phrase "without any mental reservation" also appears in the federal oath.¹⁹

The analogy to Congress follows from the same principle. A member-elect is likewise required to take a constitutional oath before assuming the duties of office, and that oath is more explicit than the oath at issue in *Wadmond*: The member-elect must swear to "support and defend the Constitution," bear "true faith and allegiance" to it, and undertake that obligation "without any

¹⁴ 405 U.S. 676, 683–84 (1972).

¹⁵ 401 U.S. 154, 164–66 (1971).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.* at 165–66.

¹⁹ *Id.* at 166.

mental reservation or purpose of evasion.”²⁰ If *Wadmond* permits government to look beyond the mere recitation of an oath and determine beforehand whether an applicant can undertake it in good faith, there is a substantial argument that the congressional oath need not be treated as an empty formality either. The unresolved question is whether the House may similarly examine whether a member-elect who has personally embraced the destruction of the constitutional order can truthfully undertake the allegiance that Article VI requires before assuming office.²¹ *Wadmond* does not decide that question, but it supplies a significant doctrinal foundation for asking it.

The Constitution Requires Individual Intent, Not Guilt by Association

The Supreme Court has also addressed when an organization’s unlawful objectives may be attributed to an individual member. *Elfbrandt v. Russell* establishes that the relevant constitutional inquiry depends not on membership alone but whether the individual shares an organization’s unlawful purpose and acts with the specific intent to further it.²² Accordingly, this kind of narrow government inquiry into individual conduct does not sweep into broader First Amendment association protections. *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* carries that rule forward, treating specific intent as the constitutional standard for determining when an organization’s unlawful purposes may be attributed to one of its members.²³ Those cases therefore provide a rule that fits naturally with *Wadmond*. If Congress inquires whether a member-elect can take the constitutional oath in good faith, these cases provide a constitutionally grounded method for that inquiry by turning to the member-elect’s own commitments and intent. It can therefore be both narrow and searching, examining the member-elect’s own words, conduct, and purposes to determine whether the unlawful objective is genuinely his or her own. The evidence needs to establish that he or she has personally embraced and intends to advance an unlawful objective incompatible with the allegiance he or she must swear to the Constitution.

Scales v. United States demonstrates a case in which an organization’s objectives become evidence of an individual’s own commitments.²⁴ Junius Irving Scales was a leader of the Communist Party of the United States during the Cold War and was prosecuted under the Smith Act for knowing membership in an organization advocating the overthrow of the government by force or violence.²⁵ The government did not prevail simply by identifying Scales as a Communist Party member. The statute required proof that he was an active member of the organization, knew of its unlawful objectives, and specifically intended to advance those objectives.²⁶ The Court upheld Scales’s conviction because the evidence demonstrated his own purposeful

²⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 3331.

²¹ See U.S. CONST. art. VI, cl. 3.

²² 384 U.S. 11, 17–19 (1966).

²³ 385 U.S. 589, 606–08 (1967).

²⁴ 367 U.S. 203 (1961).

²⁵ *Id.* at 205–06.

²⁶ *Id.* at 220–24.

commitment to the party's unlawful objectives rather than merely attributing the organization's views to him based on association.²⁷ The Court distinguished active, knowing, and intentional participation from "nominal, passive, inactive or purely technical" membership.²⁸ The significance of *Scales* is that constitutional allegiance ultimately turns on the individual himself: An organization's objectives become legally meaningful only when the evidence establishes that the individual has knowingly adopted and sought to advance them.²⁹

In the context of a congressional oath, a member-elect's statements, actions, and commitments can show that he or she has personally embraced an objective incompatible with the obligation he or she must undertake. Where that showing exists, the issue becomes whether the individual can truthfully swear to "support and defend the Constitution," bear "true faith and allegiance" to it, and undertake that obligation "without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion."³⁰

Bond and Powell Leave the Article VI Question Open

Bond v. Floyd comes closest to the question presented here.³¹ Julian Bond had been elected to the Georgia House of Representatives when fellow legislators challenged his right to take his seat, arguing that his statements opposing the Vietnam War and the Selective Service system were inconsistent with the oath he was required to take before assuming office.³² The Georgia House agreed and voted that Bond "shall not be allowed to take the oath of office" or be seated.³³ Georgia defended that decision in part on Article VI, arguing that the constitutional oath operated as a condition of office and permitted the legislature to determine whether Bond could satisfy it.³⁴

The Supreme Court rejected Georgia's application of the oath to Bond, but its reasoning preserved the oath's force. Bond had repeatedly expressed his willingness to swear to support the Constitution, and the record did not establish that his opposition to the war amounted to a rejection of that obligation.³⁵ The Court nevertheless made clear that a "legislator, of course, can be required to swear to support the Constitution of the United States as a condition of holding office."³⁶ More importantly, the Court expressly distinguished Bond's case from one in which a legislator "swears to an oath pro forma while declaring or manifesting his disagreement with or indifference to the oath."³⁷ A pro forma oath is an oath in form but not in substance: The official recites the required words while declining to accept the obligation those words impose. *Bond*

²⁷ *Id.* at 224–28.

²⁸ *Id.* at 220–21.

²⁹ *Id.* at 228–30.

³⁰ 5 U.S.C. § 3331.

³¹ *Bond v. Floyd*, 385 U.S. 116, 132 (1966).

³² 385 U.S. at 118–25.

³³ *Id.* at 125.

³⁴ *Id.* at 130–32.

³⁵ *Id.* at 132–36.

³⁶ *Id.* at 132.

³⁷ *Id.*

therefore leaves open precisely the circumstance in which the oath itself, rather than disagreement over public policy, becomes the constitutional issue.

Bond gives Article VI independent significance on this point. A member-elect who criticizes the Constitution, seeks to amend it, or advocates sweeping political change through lawful means has not thereby rejected the oath. But a member-elect who has personally embraced the unlawful destruction of the constitutional order and continues to maintain that commitment when called upon to swear allegiance to that order presents the situation *Bond* expressly set aside. Administering the oath to a member-elect who aims to destroy the constitutional republic of the United States would not resolve any constitutional conflict if he or she were allowed to treat the words of the oath as perfunctory while retaining the very commitment the oath requires him or her to renounce. Article VI requires him or her to be “bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution,”³⁸ and Congress has prescribed an oath requiring allegiance and freedom from mental reservation.³⁹ That kind of oath cannot be taken pro forma. Read together, those provisions support an argument that taking the oath requires acceptance of the constitutional obligation, not simply its verbal recitation.

That argument also answers the qualification problem raised by *Powell v. McCormack*. *Powell* bars the House from excluding an elected member by inventing qualifications beyond those prescribed by the Constitution.⁴⁰ But *Powell* expressly left unresolved whether Article VI’s oath requirement itself constitutes a constitutional qualification for purposes of Article I, Section 5. The argument here therefore does not depend on Congress adding an ideological qualification to those fixed by the Constitution. It rests on the Constitution’s own command that every representative be bound by an oath to support it. Because that command has substantive force, enforcing it no more adds a qualification than does enforcing the Constitution’s requirements of age, citizenship, or inhabitancy.

Roadmap for Congressional Action: Enforce the Oath Before Seating

Congress should enforce the Article VI oath when it matters: before a member-elect becomes a Member. Going back to 1789, the House has legally required the oath to be administered before a representative-elect takes his seat.⁴¹

The House has a procedure for forcing the Article VI theory question before the oath is administered.

1. Build the record before the new Congress convenes. Congressional leadership and interested members should assemble the member-elect’s statements, conduct, and commitments

³⁸ U.S. CONST. art. VI, cl. 3.

³⁹ 5 U.S.C. § 3331.

⁴⁰ *Powell*, 395 U.S. at 522, 548, 550.

⁴¹ 2 U.S.C. § 25.

that bear on his or her present ability to undertake the oath. For now, the record must establish more than membership in an organization or adhering to a contra-constitutional identity. It should establish that the member-elect himself has embraced the unlawful destruction or overthrow of the constitutional order, or otherwise manifested that he or she does not accept the constitutional obligation required.

The inquiry should also establish the member-elect's present position. A genuine repudiation of earlier statements bears directly on whether he or she can currently take the oath. Continued adherence to them may present the circumstance expressly reserved in *Bond*: a legislator who "swears to an oath pro forma while declaring or manifesting his disagreement with or indifference to the oath."⁴²

The factual record should be complete before the 120th Congress convenes on January 3, 2027.

2. The House is the right place to question a member-elect's qualification. State certification establishes the ordinary electoral claim to the seat, not the final constitutional right to serve. Before the House convenes, the clerk places on the roll the names of representatives-elect whose credentials demonstrate that they were regularly elected in accordance with state and federal law.⁴³ But Article I separately provides that "each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members."⁴⁴

House precedent accordingly distinguishes credentials from the House's ultimate judgment. Credentials in proper form ordinarily establish a prima facie right to be sworn when the member-elect's qualifications are unquestioned, but the House may question that prima facie right and may defer the oath when a qualification question arises.⁴⁵

The Article VI challenge therefore belongs in the House, even when the member-elect arrives with valid state credentials.

3. Raise the Article VI objection when the oath is called. The new House first elects its Speaker. Federal law provides that a member (traditionally the dean of the House) administers the oath to the Speaker and that the Speaker then administers the oath to the members-elect before they take their seats.⁴⁶ When the Speaker directs the members-elect to take the oath, a member-elect may challenge another member-elect's right to be sworn.⁴⁷ When a challenge is raised, the Speaker may direct the challenged member-elect to stand aside while the House

⁴² *Bond*, 385 U.S. at 132.

⁴³ 2 U.S.C. § 26.

⁴⁴ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 5, cl. 1.

⁴⁵ CONSTITUTION, JEFFERSON'S MANUAL, AND RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES § 202–06.

⁴⁶ 2 U.S.C. § 25.

⁴⁷ CONSTITUTION, JEFFERSON'S MANUAL, AND RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES § 202.

determines whether the oath should be administered.⁴⁸ The Speaker does not finally determine the member-elect's right to be sworn; the question is submitted to the House for determination.⁴⁹

The Article VI objection should be made at that point.

4. Have the challenged member-elect stand aside. Once an objection is raised, the Speaker may direct the challenged member-elect to stand aside temporarily while the House considers the objection.⁵⁰ The Speaker's role is to preserve the question for resolution by the House, which retains the constitutional authority to judge the elections, returns, and qualifications of its members under Article I.⁵¹ The remaining members-elect may then take the oath while the challenged member-elect stands aside pending the House's determination.⁵²

This procedural step preserves the status quo while the House considers the objection.

5. Withhold the oath and refer the question to the House. When the Member-elect's prima facie right is contested, the Speaker does not administer the oath while the challenge is pending.⁵³ The House, rather than the Speaker, determines what action to take on the challenge. For the Article VI challenge, the House may keep the member-elect unsworn while it determines the narrow question whether he or she can genuinely take the constitutional oath.

6. Decide whether the oath can actually be undertaken. The House should decide the question on the full evidentiary record developed in support of the objection. The objecting member should place the documentary record before the House, and the House should debate whether that evidence establishes that the member-elect remains committed to destroying the constitutional order.⁵⁴

The House should then vote on a resolution making the necessary findings: that the record establishes the member-elect's commitment to destroying the constitutional order, that this commitment is incompatible with an oath to "support and defend the Constitution" and bear "true faith and allegiance" to it, and that the member-elect therefore cannot undertake the oath in good faith but could take it only pro forma.⁵⁵

If the House adopts those findings, it should conclude that the member-elect cannot satisfy Article VI's oath requirement and decline to administer the oath. Under the theory developed here, the House is not imposing a new ideological qualification. It is judging whether the

⁴⁸ *Id.* §§ 202–03.

⁴⁹ *Id.* § 203.

⁵⁰ *Id.* § 202.

⁵¹ *Id.* § 203; U.S. CONST. art. I, § 5, cl. 1.

⁵² CONSTITUTION, JEFFERSON'S MANUAL, AND RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES §§ 202–03.

⁵³ *Id.* § 204.

⁵⁴ *Id.* §§ 202–03.

⁵⁵ 5 U.S.C. § 3331; *see Bond*, 385 U.S. at 132 (1966).

member-elect satisfies a constitutional requirement that Article VI imposes and that the Court left open in *Powell*.⁵⁶

7. Resolve the challenge by House vote and exclude the member-elect. The House, not the Speaker, should make the final determination.⁵⁷ House precedent accordingly permits motions and debate on an objection to a member-elect’s right to take the oath.⁵⁸ The House should then vote on a resolution embodying the findings reached in step 6. If the House adopts the resolution, the Speaker should not administer the oath. The resolution should declare that the member-elect cannot satisfy Article VI’s oath requirement, exclude him or her from membership, declare the seat vacant, and direct the Speaker to notify the governor of the state of the vacancy.⁵⁹ The state would then fill the vacancy through a special election pursuant to the Constitution and applicable state law.⁶⁰

Other Constitutional Remedies Do Not Replace Article VI

Article VI is not Congress’s only constitutional mechanism for addressing a member who acts against the constitutional order, but the alternatives operate differently and answer different constitutional problems. The most direct pathway to unseat a member-elect who disavows the Constitution is to resolve his eligibility before administering the oath. Under the theory developed here, if the House determines that the member-elect cannot genuinely undertake the Article VI oath, it should decline to administer the oath and exclude him or her before becoming a member.

Expulsion Provides a Separate Remedy Only After a Member Has Been Seated

Article I authorizes each House, “with the Concurrence of two thirds,” to expel a member.⁶¹ That demanding vote threshold makes expulsion a materially different mechanism. Where the constitutional defect exists before the member-elect takes the oath, the more direct path is for the House to enforce Article VI and to prevent membership from attaching in the first place rather than seat the member and later attempt to assemble a two-thirds majority for expulsion.

Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment Supplies Another, Narrower Constitutional Disqualification

The third section of the Fourteenth Amendment applies to a person who previously took a qualifying oath to support the Constitution and thereafter engaged in an insurrection.⁶² This

⁵⁶ *Powell*, 395 U.S. at 520 n.41.

⁵⁷ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 5, cl. 1.

⁵⁸ CONSTITUTION, JEFFERSON’S MANUAL, AND RULES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES §§ 202–03.

⁵⁹ See *Powell*, 395 U.S. at 492–93 (1969).

⁶⁰ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 2, cl. 4; 2 U.S.C. § 8(a).

⁶¹ U.S. CONST. art. I, § 5, cl. 2.

⁶² U.S. CONST. amend. XIV, § 3.

primer does not treat lawful political protest or lawful opposition to governmental action as an insurrection. Further, a member-elect's eligibility to take the oath turns on whether he or she has taken part in an insurrection or undertaken efforts to destroy the constitutional republic before taking office. Section 3 is a separate constitutional disqualification for those who have previously taken a qualifying oath and thereafter engaged in insurrection or rebellion, or given aid or comfort to the enemies of the United States. It is not the theory put forward here. The Article VI theory seeks to disqualify a member-elect before taking the oath and being seated.

Conclusion

Federal law recognizes that certain Communist and totalitarian affiliations may be fundamentally incompatible with the allegiance required to become an American citizen, yet current law does not make those same affiliations a bar to serving in Congress. That gap warrants serious attention. The Constitution does not permit Congress to close it by inventing new ideological qualifications or imposing religious tests. But Congress need not surrender its constitutional institutions to those who would use them against the constitutional order itself.

To the extent that DSA and other Communist, Marxist, Muslim, or other anticonstitutional movements seek to use the United States' own institutions as a Trojan horse to undermine the republic, the Constitution, and the culture that sustains the American people, Congress must distinguish protected association and lawful political advocacy from the individual who has personally embraced that objective. Article VI provides the constitutional line. It does not ask what party a member-elect joined, what ideology he or she espouses, or what religion he or she professes. It asks something more fundamental of every person entrusted with federal office: that he or she bind himself or herself by oath to support the Constitution.

Congress can give that command force. A member-elect cannot be permitted to obtain the powers and privileges of constitutional office by reciting an oath pro forma while retaining a commitment to destroy the order he or she has sworn to support. Where the evidence establishes that contradiction, the House should resolve it before administering the oath and before membership attaches.

The oath also binds the members called upon to make that judgment. They have themselves sworn to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic" and to "bear true faith and allegiance" to it.⁶³ When a member-elect has demonstrated his or her commitment to destroying that constitutional order, the House should not treat his oath as an empty formality. Members who have sworn to defend the Constitution have every reason to enforce the same constitutional obligation on those who seek to join them.

⁶³ See 5 U.S.C. § 3331.

Article VI does not require the House to ignore what it knows and accept words it has reason to believe are hollow. Simply put, the oath should mean what it says.