



MEDIA ADVISORY  
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CONTACT: Elizabeth Lane  
elizabeth.lane@ag.tn.gov

**TN AG SKRMETTI LEADS 19 STATE COALITION URGING PRESIDENT BIDEN TO  
ADHERE TO THE CONSTITUTION AND USE THE LAWFUL PROCESS TO  
RESOLVE THE DEBT CEILING DEBATE**

*Federal law requires congressional approval to raise the debt ceiling*

**Nashville-** Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti led a coalition of 19 state attorneys general in urging President Biden’s administration to follow the law and not unilaterally expand executive power to raise or ignore the ceiling without congressional approval. The President recently asserted publicly that the executive branch has this authority under the 14th Amendment. It does not.

“The Constitution is clear that only Congress has the power to authorize an increase in the national debt,” General Skrmetti said. “The separation of powers in our constitutional system may be frustrating sometimes, but the checks and balances it creates are the heart of American liberty. If we start taking illegal shortcuts, no matter how compelling the justification, we put our whole system at risk.”

The coalition explains that the Constitution explicitly allows Congress the authority to tax, spend, and borrow money on the credit of the United States. These powers are specifically enumerated in the Constitution as belonging to Congress, and executive branch efforts to usurp those powers are not lawful.

In the letter, the attorneys general write, “The power of the purse constitutes Congress’s strongest defense against a lawless executive. By giving credence to the idea that a President can unilaterally authorize new debt for the United States, you undermine the checks and balances that have defined the rule of law for over 200 years.”

The coalition of state attorneys general does not attempt to dictate policy, but instead reminds the executive branch that the debt ceiling debate must be solved through the democratic process in accordance with the Constitution. The 14th Amendment does not allow the executive branch to ignore the law or the separation of powers inherent in the Constitution.

General Skrmetti led the letter signed by attorneys general from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia.

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