

In a letter today to Obama, four senior House Democrats scolded him, saying he is being too much like former President George W. Bush in using the statements to ignore legislation he thinks oversteps the Constitution, the Associated Press reports.

The House members said they were "surprised" and "chagrined" by Obama's statement in June accompanying a war spending bill that he would ignore restrictions placed on aid provided to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The letter was signed by Representatives David Obey of Wisconsin; chairman of the House Appropriations Committee; Barney Frank of Massachusetts, chairman of the House Financial Services Committee; and Nita Lowey and Gregory Meeks of New York, who chair subcommittees on those panels.

Congressional Democrats were harshly critical of Bush's signing statements, which they argued violated the constitutional separation of powers. Critics contended Bush used such statements to expand his power, particularly on national security, by ignoring the intent or certain provisions of bills properly passed by Congress. (Charlie Savage, then with the Globe, won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting for documenting Bush's actions.)

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