No Kings

February 18, 2019

President Donald Trump speaks during an event in the Rose Garden at the White House to declare a national emergency in order to build a wall along the southern border, Friday, Feb. 15, 2019, in Washington.

Photo: Evan Vucci, STF / Associated Press

“Regarding “Trump to call for national emergency” (Front page, Friday): Regardless of one’s political views about whether to build the wall, the legislature, the branch of government empowered to appropriate money, officially has spoken. Of note is the fact that most Republican
members of Congress voted Thursday not to authorize the amount of money requested by President Trump to build the wall.

So, any of those Republicans who now refuse to block Trump’s “national emergency” declaration (which is tantamount to circumventing the vote by redistributing specifically allocated money) explicitly will abdicate their most important constitutional authority and responsibility: budgetary appropriation. There would be no reason, therefore, for them to remain in Congress.

No member of congress — Democrat or Republican — should relinquish the power of the purse. After all, a fundamental principle anchoring our constitutional system of checks and balances is preventing the president from becoming too powerful. Our Founding Fathers rejected the unitary executive premise; they did not want a self-appointed king.

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