

Unconstitutional Official Acts

16 Am Jur 2d, Sec 177 late 2d, Sec 256:

The general misconception is that any statute passed by legislators bearing the appearance of law constitutes the law of the land. The U.S. Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and any statute, to be valid, must be in agreement. It is impossible for both the Constitution and a law violating it to be valid; one must prevail. This is succinctly stated as follows:

The General rule is that an unconstitutional statute, though having the form and name of law is in reality no law, but is wholly void, and ineffective for any purpose; since unconstitutionality dates from the time of its enactment and not merely from the date of the decision so branding it. An unconstitutional law, in legal contemplation, is as inoperative as if it had never been passed. Such a statute leaves the question that it purports to settle just as it would be had the statute not been enacted.

Since an unconstitutional law is void, the general principles follow that it imposes no duties, confers no rights, creates no office, bestows no power or authority on anyone, affords no protection, and justifies no acts performed under it.....

A void act cannot be legally consistent with a valid one. An unconstitutional law cannot operate to supersede any existing valid law. Indeed, insofar as a statute runs counter to the fundamental law of the land, it is superseded thereby.

No one is bound to obey an unconstitutional law and no courts are bound to enforce it.

Jon Roland:

Strictly speaking, an unconstitutional statute is not a "law", and should not be called a "law", even if it is sustained by a court, for a finding that a statute or other official act is constitutional does not make it so, or confer any authority to anyone to enforce it.

All citizens and legal residents of the United States, by their presence on the territory of the United States, are subject to the militia duty, the duty of the social compact that creates the society, which requires that each, alone and in concert with others, not only obey the Constitution and constitutional official acts, but help enforce them, if necessary, at the risk of one's life.

Any unconstitutional act of an official will at least be a violation of the oath of that official to execute the duties of his office, and therefore grounds for his removal from office. No official immunity or privileges of rank or position survive the commission of unlawful acts. If it violates the rights of individuals, it is also likely to be a crime, and the militia duty obligates anyone aware of such a violation to investigate it, gather evidence for a prosecution, make an arrest, and if necessary, seek an indictment from a grand jury, and if one is obtained, prosecute the offender in a court of law.