

## Testing Constitutional Waters IV: Power of the Purse in Light of the *Belgica* and *Araullo* Rulings

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Political status quo was shaken up by the exposition of the wide-scale corruption scheme allegedly spearheaded by Janet Lim-Napoles. This fraudulent practice caused embezzlement of billions of the government funds from the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) or “pork barrel” and from the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP). These issues caused the PDAF and the DAP to be challenged before the Supreme Court, which subsequently declared the two as unconstitutional. However, this decision did not alleviate the continuous political imbalance among the supposed co-equal branches of the government.

To provide a context on the proprietary of the institutionalization of the PDAF and the DAP, this Article initially examined the constitutional limitations on the Congress’ power of the purse. It was followed with factual backdrop of the events that had transpired which caused the exposition of the PDAF and DAP scandal. Also, the Court’s decision in *Belgica v. Ochoa, Jr.* and *Araullo v. Aquino, III* were also discussed to shed light on the legality of the long-standing practice of the Congress and the Executive.

More importantly, the Article delineated and scrutinized the Legislature’s and Executive’s reactions to the Court’s ruling. Political events after the promulgation the *Belgica* and *Araullo* were delineated to demonstrate the imbalance between the Executive and the Legislature, on one hand, and the Judiciary, on the other. This Article concluded that a more constructive engagement with the Judiciary is needed to achieve a healthy balance among the three branches of government.