



*We the People* of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, We ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

**Article I  
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

**Section 1: Description.** The legislative branch of government, or Congress, makes all the laws. It has two parts, or houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

**Section 2: House of Representatives.** Members of the House of Representatives serve a two-year term. They are elected by the people. Representatives must be at least 25 years old, citizens of the United States for at least seven years, and citizens of the state they represent.

The number of representatives from each state depends on that state's population. In order to decide on the number of representatives from each state, the government must count the people every 10 years. This is called a census.

**Section 3: The Senate.** The Senate is made up of two senators from each state. Senators have a six-year term. Senators must be at least 30 years old, citizens of the United States for at least nine years, and citizens of the state they represent.

The Vice-President of the United States is in charge of the Senate, but may only vote in case of a tie.

**Sections 4-7: Rules.** Instructions on how to operate both the House and the Senate are covered. Behavior of members, record keeping, pay, and how a bill becomes a law are covered.

**Sections 8-10: Duties.** The exact jobs of Congress are listed. Congress makes all money and trade laws. Congress decides

how people can become citizens of the United States and can declare war if necessary. Powers Congress and the states do not have are also listed.

**Article II  
EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**Section 1: Description.** The executive branch is made up of the President of the United States and those who help carry out laws passed by Congress. The President manages the government. A President and Vice-President are elected to a four-year term.

A President must have been born in the United States, must be at least 35 years old, and must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years.

**Sections 2-4: Duties.** Some of the President's jobs include carrying out the laws made by Congress, responsibility for all the armed force, pardoning crimes, and reporting to Congress at least once a year on what the nation is doing. The President makes treaties and appoints government leaders; the Senate must give its approval.

If the President does wrong, he may be removed from office.

**Article III  
JUDICIAL BRANCH**

**Section 1: Description.** The judicial branch of government is the federal court system. The Supreme Court is the nation's highest court. It has the final say in all matters of law. Judges are appointed, not elected to office.

**Section 2: Duties.** The federal courts have a say in all cases that are not entirely within a state.

**Section 3: Treason.** The crime of trea-

son, trying to overthrow the government, is explained.

**Article IV  
THE STATES**

**Sections 1-4: Rules about the states.** All states must accept acts, records, and laws of other states. A citizen of one state must be given the same rights as the citizens of another state he or she may be in. The governor of one state may send an accused criminal from another state back to that state for trial.

New states may be added to the United States. The United States government will protect all states from enemies.

**Article V  
AMENDMENTS**

**Making changes.** The Constitution may be amended, or changed.

**Article VI  
HIGHEST LAW**

**Above all others.** The Constitution of the United States is the highest law in the land. State laws must be under this law. All national and state lawmakers and offices must support the Constitution.

**Article VII  
PASSING THE CONSTITUTION**

**Ratification.** This Constitution becomes law when nine of the 13 states ratify it, or approve it.

**AMENDMENTS**

**The first ten amendments are known as "THE BILL OF RIGHTS"**

**Amendment I:** Congress may not make rules to change freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or the right of people to come together in a peaceful way or to send petitions to their government.

**Amendment II:** The people have the right to keep and bear arms.

**Amendment III:** During peacetime, the government cannot make citizens put up soldiers in their homes.

**Amendment IV:** People or their homes may not be searched unreasonably.

**Amendment V:** Persons accused of serious crimes have the right to a jury trial. They may not be forced to give evidence against themselves. Their lives, freedom, and property may not be taken from them unfairly. If the government takes a person's property for public use, it must pay the owner for it.

**Amendment VI:** Persons accused of serious crimes have the right to a speedy and public trial. They must be told what they are accused of. They have the right to have a lawyer. They have the right to see and question those who accuse them.

**Amendment VII:** In most cases, there must be a right to a jury trial.

**Amendment VIII:** Punishment may not be cruel and unusual.

**Amendments IX and X:** If the Constitution does not give a certain right to the United States government, and also does not forbid a state government to have that right, then the states and the people have it.

**Amendment XI:** The power of the judicial branch is limited to certain kinds of cases.

**Amendment XII:** Electors vote for President and Vice-President separately.

**Amendment XIII:** Slavery may not exist

in the United States.

**Amendment XIV:** People born in the United States or naturalized here are United States citizens. They are also citizens of the states they live in.

States may not make laws that limit the rights of citizens of the United States. They may not take away a person's life or freedom of property unfairly. They must treat all people equally under the law.

**Amendment XV:** No citizen may be denied the right to vote because of race.

**Amendment XVI:** Congress is allowed to pass an income tax law.

**Amendment XVII:** United States senators are elected by the people.

**Amendment XVIII:** Liquor may no longer be manufactured or sold in the United States.

**Amendment XIX:** No citizen may be denied the right to vote because of sex.

**Amendment XX:** Presidents start their new terms on January 20; Congress starts its new term on January 3.

**Amendment XXI:** The eighteenth amendment to this Constitution is repealed, or taken back.

**Amendment XXII:** Presidents are limited to two terms in office.

**Amendment XXIII:** Residents of Washington, D.C., have the right to vote for President.

**Amendment XXIV:** Citizens need not pay a tax in order to vote for President, senators, or members of Congress.

**Amendment XXV:** In case the President becomes too ill to carry on the job; the Vice-President will take over as Acting President until the President is better.

**Amendment XXVI:** No citizen who is 18 years of age or older may be denied the right to vote because of age.

**CONSTITUTION'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATED AT THOMAS & MACK**



The Miracle at Philadelphia Pageant will be presented Friday, September 18 at 7:00 P.M. at the Thomas & Mack Center. This will be Southern Nevada's own patriotic celebration of the 200th Birthday of the Constitution of the United States. Thousands of people

throughout our valley have been involved in the preparation of this exciting patriotic presentation of one of the most important events in our history. This is an ideal family show and admission to the public is free. Hear the flaming oratory of Patrick Henry; the wisdom of Franklin; and the sober concerns of Washington in vivid reenactments of significant historical events. Enjoy the magnificent bicentennial choirs and witness the beautifully choreographed production numbers featuring hundreds of talented Nevadans, young and old. Don't miss this marvelous opportunity to show your love and respect for our country.

*We The People*

**The Bill of Rights**

When members of the Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia 200 years ago, one of their major goals was to provide for a more powerful federal government while safeguarding basic rights for all citizens.

Although it's hard to believe now, some major American leaders of the day were adamantly opposed to the very idea of a Constitution for the new government.

Even after the new Constitution was written, it was by no means certain that the necessary number of states would ratify it.

When the Virginia Constitutional Convention met to consider ratification, Patrick Henry spoke in opposition. "The rights of conscience, trial by jury, liberty of the press . . . all pretensions to human rights and privileges, are rendered insecure, if not lost, by this change."

The battle lines were drawn over how to shape this new experiment in democracy. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay collaborated on the famous Federalist Papers explaining the new Constitution. These documents were widely circulated and debated in the states.

Supporters of the Constitution won, but not by much. The vote in Virginia was 89-79, and in New York, it passed by the slim margin of three votes.

Even though they lost the battle against ratification, the opponents contributed as much to our modern system of government as the supporters. It was their criticism that forced supporters to promise an immediate series of amendments to guarantee individual rights.

Ten amendments were adopted in 1791 to safeguard individual rights and freedoms from government encroachment. It is in those 10 amendments—the Bill of Rights—that we find the protection given the right to peaceably assemble, freedom of the press and speech, the right to a speedy and public trial by jury, and the right to the free exercise of religion.

These provisions are considered such an integral part of the Constitution that many don't realize they were not included in the original proposal. It is the combination of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights that is considered one of the greatest documents in human history.

This is one of a series of columns celebrating the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

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