

The U.S. Constitution

Citizen's Edition— *More user friendly & quicker to the point than the original...*

Faithful but unofficial and unauthorized

FOR REFERENCE ONLY!

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We the People... in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution...

Article I (Legislative Branch)

Section 1. All legislative Powers are vested in Congress.

Section 2. The House of Representatives (Representing the People) shall be...chosen every 2 Years (Minimum age 25, 7 Years a Citizen). The number of Representatives (capped at 435 in 1929) shall be apportioned by *census of actual Enumeration* every ten years... The House of Representatives shall have sole Power of Impeachment.

Section 3. The Senate (Representing the States) shall consist of *two members from each State* for a term of 6 Years, each, staggered by at least two years (Minimum age 30, 9 Years a Citizen). The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate... The Senate shall have sole Power to try all Impeachment's. When the President of the United States is tried the Chief Justice shall preside...And in all cases conviction requires two thirds vote of the Senate. Judgment shall not extend further than removal from office — *but party is still subject to law!*

Section 4. Elections (now prescribed in Amendment 20) Congress shall assemble at least once a year.

Section 5. Each House shall be the Judge of its own Members... and may compel the Attendance of absent Members in such Manner as each House may provide. Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings and with the Concurrence of two thirds *expel* a Member.

Each House shall keep a journal of its Proceedings and publish the same *excepting such Parts as may, in their Judgment, require Secrecy*; the Yeas and Nays of the Members on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of those Present, be entered on the journal.

Section 6. Members shall be paid and are privileged from Arrest. No Senator or Representative shall *concurrently* hold any other Office.

Section 7. All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; *but the Senate may propose and/or concur with Amendments to these bills...*

Every Bill shall be presented to the President for approval. If any Bill shall not be approved within ten Days (Sundays excepted) it shall become a Law by default as if it had been signed, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return in which Case it shall not be a Law. If returned to the Congress for reconsideration and approved by two thirds of them over the President's objection, it shall become a Law; but in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be by Names of the Persons voting and entered on the Journal of each House respectively.

Section 8. Taxes and Powers of Congress: The Congress shall have the Power To lay and collect Taxes *and, among other things,* to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States —*uniformly throughout the United States!* There is a long list of express powers that supposedly constrain Congress specifically to what it can do, except for the zinger at the end: "And to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof." (In other words, Congress gets to do anything it can get away with that the President signs and the Supreme Court doesn't overturn!)

Section 9. Some archaic and some technical matters... *Powers specifically denied to Congress*

The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it. No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed. No Capitation or other direct Tax shall be laid *unless in Proportion to the Census of Enumeration (until the passage of Amendment 16 in 1913)*. No money shall be drawn from the Treasury except by Law; and a regular Statement of all public Money shall be published from time to time. No Title of Nobility shall ever be granted!

Section 10. No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation... *independent of the United States.*

Article II (Executive Branch)

Section 1. Executive Power of the United States is vested in the President and Vice President who must be natural born Citizens (at least Age 35, 14 Years a Resident) for a term of office of 4 Years, each, *Elected by the Electoral College (a Number of Electors equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives from each state but not including them or any other Person holding Office of Trust or Profit under the United States)*. The President and Vice President shall be paid, but shall not receive any other Emolument... The President shall take the following Oath or Affirmation: —*“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”*

Section 2. The President shall be Commander in Chief... He shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons (except in Cases of Impeachment.), to make Treaties (provided two thirds of the Senators present concur); and he shall nominate, and *with the Advice and Consent of the Senate*, appoint Ambassadors, Judges of the Supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States not herein otherwise provided for...

Section 3. State of the Union address and other matters... *On extraordinary Occasions* the President can convene both Houses, or either of them, and adjourn them, receive Ambassadors, etc... *(Implies congressional concurrence to do this.)*

Section 4. Executive Impeachment: The President, Vice President and all civil officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Article III (Judicial Branch)

Section 1. The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and inferior Courts as Congress may ordain... The Judges shall hold their Office during good behavior (for life) and shall receive Compensation *which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.*

Section 2. Judicial Power shall extend to all cases arising under this Constitution, including Treaties...(modified regarding lawsuits against states by Amendment 11 in 1795).

In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have Original Jurisdiction... In all other cases the Supreme Court shall have Appellate Jurisdiction...

The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury and shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law direct.

Section 3. Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture, except during the Life of the Person attained. (Sins of the parent cannot be made to taint the child.)

The U.S. Constitution is shorter and more to the point than most organization by-laws. “No country based its form of government on a single document until the United States did so in 1787.”

Article IV (States Issues and certain Guarantees)

Section 1. Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and Judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof... (States Rights versus Federal Power—the never ending battle between the two.)

Section 2. Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of all Citizens in other States (including extradition and reciprocity).

Section 3. New States may be admitted into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

Section 4. A “Republican” Form of Government is guaranteed in each state along with the protection against Invasion and Domestic Violence...

Article V (Amendments)

Two thirds of both Houses can propose Amendments to this Constitution, **or two thirds of the several States** can call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, **shall be valid when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress... (Amendments are the Secret of America's Success—and Future!)**

Article VI (Power of Constitution)

This Constitution shall be the supreme Law of the Land! All elected officials and Judges in every State shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, thereby, etc... *but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.*

Article VII (Ratification)

Signed in Philadelphia, September 17, 1787 by members from 12 colonies; made effective the following year on March 4, 1789 by First Congress—and finally accepted by all thirteen colonies and embraced as the Law of the Land by ratification of the Bill of Rights on December 15th, 1791.

Amendments (The Secret of America's Success)

First Ten Amendments (The Bill of Rights) were ratified collectively on December 15, 1791

Amendment 1 (**The Five Freedoms**) Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of *religion* or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of *speech*, or of the *press*, or the right of the people peaceably to *assemble* and/or to *petition* the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment 2 (**Right to bear arms**) A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to *keep and bear Arms* shall not be infringed.

Amendment 3 (**Consent of owner**) No Soldier shall in time of peace be quartered in any house without the *consent of the Owner*, nor in time of war but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment 4 (**Search, seizure, and privacy**) The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against *unreasonable searches and seizures*, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue but upon *probable cause*, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place (in a search warrant) to be searched and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment 5 (**Grand jury process, double jeopardy, due process**) No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a *Grand Jury* (except in cases arising in the land or naval forces or in the Militia when in actual service in time of War or public danger); nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be *twice put in jeopardy* of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without *due process* of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Amendment 6 (**Speedy and public trial, right to counsel and confrontation**) In all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to a *speedy and public trial* by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed (which district shall have been previously ascertained by law) and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with *the witnesses against him*; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have *the Assistance of Counsel*...

Amendment 7 (**Trial by jury**) In Suits at common law...the right of *trial by jury* shall be preserved and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any Court...other than according to the rules of common law.

Amendment 8 (**Cruel and unusual punishment**) Excessive bail shall not be required, excessive fines imposed, *nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.*

Amendment 9 (**Retained individual rights**) The enumeration of these rights shall not be construed to *deny or disparage others* retained by the people.

Amendment 10 (**States Rights and all other powers “to the people!”**) The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, *are reserved to the States respectively — or to the people!*

Amendment 11 (**US Judicial Power regarding lawsuits against any state**) **Feb 7, 1795**

The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State or any Foreign State.

Amendment 12 (**Electoral College revised—see also Amendments 20 & 25**) **July 27, 1804**

Amendment 13 (**Abolition of Slavery**) **Dec. 6, 1865**

Neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States...

Amendment 14 (**Naturalization & Civil War Issues**) **July 9, 1868**

Section 1. “All persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens.” No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Sections 2, 3, and 4 are all Civil War issues that no longer apply...

Amendment 15 (**Race, Color, Servitude**) **Feb. 3, 1870**

The right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.

Amendment 16 (**Income Tax**) **Feb. 3, 1913**

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

Amendment 17 (**Senate Vacancies**) **April 8, 1913**

When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided that the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

Amendment 18 (**Prohibition of Alcohol**) **Jan. 16, 1919** (See Amendment 21)

Amendment 19 (**Women’s Rights**) **Aug. 18, 1920**

The right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex.

Amendment 20 (**Various “Term” dates & Succession—see also 12 & 25**) **Jan. 23, 1933**

Section 1. The terms of the President and Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3rd day of January.

Section 2. The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3rd day of January unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for...the manner in which one...shall be selected...

Section 4. The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them...

Amendment 21 (**Repeal of Prohibition—18th Amendment**) **Dec. 5, 1933**

Amendment 22 (**2 Term Limit for President**) **Feb. 27, 1951**

No person shall be elected to the office of President more than twice, and no person who has held the office or acted as President for more than two years of a term...shall be elected more than once.

Amendment 23 (**D.C. admitted to Electoral College**) **March 29, 1961**

The District (of Columbia)...shall appoint...A number of electors...as provided by the twelfth amendment.

Amendment 24 (**Poll tax finally eliminated**) **Jan. 23, 1964**

The right to vote shall not be denied by reason of failure to pay any tax.

Amendment 25 (**Vacancy & Competency in Executive Branch**) **Feb. 10, 1967** (See also Amendments 12 and 20)

Section 4 of this amendment... America has survived several Presidential deaths, one resignation, and if it should ever happen that the Vice-president and a majority of other principals around him transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House, in writing, at the same time, their declaration that the President is unable to discharge his duties and powers — try to imagine how that might go?

Amendment 26 (**Age 18 Right to Vote**) **July 1, 1971** The right to vote age 18 or older shall not be denied.

Amendment 27 (**Congressional pay raise delayed at least one term**) **May 7, 1992**

— The Constitution stops here for now —

Amendments 1-10, 13,14,15,19,24,26 advanced social progress



Comments, Corrections (Requests for more pamphlets)

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