

Irene's Myomassology Institute—Constitution Project

September 17, 2016

AMERICANS NEED TO KNOW THE CONSTITUTION

Despite a lack of knowledge about the Constitution, 84% of Americans believe that in order for our American constitutional form of government to work as intended, Americans are required to function as an active and informed citizenry. Citizenship Week this September is a good time for all Americans to resolve to become both informed about the Constitution and active in ensuring its preservation.

The following is a list of the key provisions in the various articles of the United States Constitution. If you learn these few facts, you will instantly be more informed about our Constitution than the vast majority of Americans.

Article I of the Constitution gives instructions for the organization and powers of a two-house legislature: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Article II establishes the Executive branch of government and vests executive power in the President of the United States.

Article III provides for the judicial branch of government with one Supreme Court and such inferior Courts as are established by Congress.

Article IV provides for Full Faith and Credit between the states, i.e., requiring that each state must recognize the laws of the other states.

Article V provides a formal means for amending the Constitution. To date, only 27 amendments have been enacted by Congress and ratified by the states, while thousands of other proposed amendments have failed.

Article VI provides that the Constitution and the laws passed by Congress shall be the supreme law of the land. In other words, these laws will control in the event that federal and state laws conflict. This provision is referred to as the Supremacy Clause.

Article VII provides that ratification by nine of the original thirteen States was needed to establish the Constitution.

The Bill of Rights, added immediately to the Constitution in 1791, includes the first ten amendments to the Constitution and guarantees many basic rights considered fundamental to the American way of life. The Bill of Rights includes the following:

Amendment I: Freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petitions to redress grievances;

Amendment II: Freedom to bear arms;

Amendment III: Freedom from quartering soldiers without consent;

Amendment IV: Freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures;

Amendment V: Freedom from self incrimination;

Amendment VI: Right to a speedy trial, assistance of counsel, and various safeguards at trial;

Amendment VII: Right to a jury trial;

Amendment VIII: Freedom from cruel and unusual punishment;

Amendment IX: Retention of non-enumerated rights by the people;

Amendment X: The right of the states and the people to

reserve the powers not delegated in the Constitution.

Other key amendments that have become part of the Constitution include: the abolition of slavery (**Amendment XIII:** 1865); authority for a federal income tax (**Amendment XVI:** 1913); the right of women to vote (**Amendment XIX:** 1920); a two term limit for Presidents (**Amendment XXII:** 1951); lowering of the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen years (**Amendment XXVI:** 1971), and delaying the effective date of Congressional pay raises until after an election (**Amendment XXVII:** 1992).

Finally, there have been fifty bills proposing additional amendments to the Constitution of the United States introduced into the current 108th Congress. Many of these proposed amendments are attempts to check the extraordinary powers currently being exercised by the federal judiciary, which are often contrary to the will of the people as expressed through their elected representatives at the state and federal levels. The following proposed Constitutional amendments currently before the Congress specifically focus on moral and religious issues:

To declare that it is not an establishment of religion for teachers in a public school to recite, or to lead willing students in the recitation of, the Pledge of Allegiance. About two million Americans have signed an Internet pledge in support of this Amendment. This proposed Amendment is a direct response to a recent decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals finding that the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance with the words "under God" in public schools is unconstitutional.

To declare a basic right to pray and to recognize America's religious heritage and traditions on public property, including public schools. This School Prayer Amendment is intended to override the U.S. Supreme Court's 1962 decision banning government-sponsored prayer in public school classrooms. It is also intended to protect the Pledge of Allegiance and the display of the Ten Commandments in public schools.

To declare that marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman and prohibits the Constitution or any State constitution or State or Federal law from being construed to require that marital status or its legal incidents be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups. This Amendment is intended to stop the courts from legalizing gay marriage against the will of the majority of the American people. It is interesting to note that Defense of Marriage Acts (DOMAs) have been enacted in 37 states and 38 states are needed to ratify a constitutional amendment.

It is intentionally very difficult to enact and ratify a Constitutional amendment. An amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and then be ratified by three-fourths of the state legislatures or by conventions in three-fourths of the states. This difficulty was intended to make amendments rare and to preserve the stability of the government.



What is the U.S. Constitution?

The U.S. Constitution is the fundamental framework of America's system of government. The Constitution:

- Creates a government that puts the power in the hands of the people
- Separates the powers of government into three branches: the legislative branch, which makes the laws; the executive branch, which executes the laws; and the judicial branch, which interprets the laws
- Sets up a system of checks and balances that ensures no one branch has too much power
- Divides power between the states and the federal government
- Describes the purposes and duties of the government
- Defines the scope and limit of government power
- Prescribes the system for electing representatives
- Establishes the process for the document's ratification and amendment
- Outlines many rights and freedoms of the people

The Presidential Election of 2016, is Tuesday, **November 8, 2016**



- ◇ You **MUST** register to vote at least 30 days before an election.
- ◇ For the Presidential Election in November 2016, you would need to register on or before October 8, 2016
- ◇ Go to: RegisterToVote.org and follow the instructions *OR* Voter Registration Applications can be picked up at Irene's Myomassology Institute's Student Records Desk.
- ◇ You can stop by your local Secretary of State or Clerk's Office and register to vote in person.

PRAYER AND THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution was never meant to prevent people from praying; its declared purpose was to protect their freedom to pray.
Ronald Reagan

President Reagan today (May 17, 1982) formally proposed a constitutional amendment permitting organized prayer in public schools. The President's proposed amendment states: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any state to participate in prayer." In a message to Congress, Mr. Reagan said that the amendment would "restore the simple freedom of our citizens to offer prayer in public schools and institutions." Organized prayer in the schools has been prohibited since 1962, when the Supreme Court ruled that it violated the constitutional separation of church and state. The President disclosed his plans to propose such an amendment two weeks ago. Message to Congress "The public expression through prayer of our faith in God is a fundamental part of our American heritage and a privilege which should not be excluded by law from any American school, public or private," he said in today's message to Congress. He said that the nation's liberty stemmed from "an abiding faith in God" and that this "has been clear from the time of George Washington, who stated in his farewell address: 'Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.'"

"I believe that it would be beneficial for our children to have an opportunity to begin each school day" with a prayer, Mr. Reagan said. "Since the law has been construed to prohibit this, I believe that the law should be changed."