

CONSTITUTION DAY 
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NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER 

Federal Employee's
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Top Ten Ways to Grow as a Citizen

Explicitly, the Constitution and its Amendments not only establish our government but give all of us a bundle of rights, some of our most precious possessions as citizens. Implicitly, however, the Constitution calls on us to be the best citizens we can be. Voting is important, but it is only a first step. Here are ten suggestions on how to build your role as an American citizen.

1. Dear Mr. President

Get involved in the democratic process by telling the President, a Senator, or local Representative about an issue that matters to you. There are guidelines for writing to a public official at the end of this top ten list. For help in identifying the political figures you wish to write to, visit the National Constitution Center's user-friendly [Citizen Action Center](#).

2. Send an Op-Ed Piece to the Newspaper

Freedom of the press includes you, too. Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed piece about an issue, big or small, that affects you and others in your community. Speak up and do something about it. The National Constitution Center's [Citizen Action Center](#) also has a news media directory.

3. The Real “Law and Order”

Head over to your local courthouse and observe the judicial process in action as a “ghost juror.” It's democracy in action and live theater that's free—and possibly a lot more exciting than “Law and Order” or “CSI.” And, sometimes, an attorney trying a case will ask you how you think his side of the case is playing.

4. Stand Up and Be Counted

Writing to your representatives in Congress and newspapers not making a difference? Stand up for your cause and petition the government protest under your First Amendment right.

5. Serve on a Jury

Along with the tax bill, one piece of mail that citizens dread getting from the government is a jury summons. Serve! The Sixth Amendment protects the right to a jury trial but the right to have cases heard by independent people from the surrounding community can only be secured if you agree to serve.

6. Run for Office

You don't have to start by running for President, but you can make a difference in a community a little bit closer to home – run for student government, president of your kids' school parent-teacher association or precinct leader for the political party of your choice.

7. Organize Your Block

Bring together your neighbors and work together on ways to make your neighborhood a safer, cleaner, and better place to raise your families.

8. Fly the Flag

Showcase your citizenship by displaying an American flag.

9. Learn about the Constitution

The Constitution is a remarkably short document—only about 4,000 words when originally written in 1787—but it has a long and inspiring history. America’s endless struggle as a people to secure the “Blessings of Liberty” promised by the Constitution is the document’s deepest meaning. Learn more about it. Two good places to start are the [“Centuries of Citizenship” timeline](#) and [“Interactive Constitution”](#) on the National Constitution Center’s web site.

10. Democracy Diary

Keep a family journal of how you and your kids are growing as citizens. Record the things you do to improve your community, make your child’s school better, or express your opinion to a Congressman or in a newspaper. Keeping an inventory of your growing role as a citizen is as important as keeping a family budget or measuring the inches as your children grow.

Dear Mr. President: How to Get Action from Your Leaders

The First Amendment guarantees the right of free speech and the right to petition the Government.

Do members of Congress and other elected officials read our letters? Absolutely. In fact, members of Congress invest a great deal of resources and staff in being able to respond to your letters and e-mail. Why? Because they know if you are the kind of person who took the time to express yourself, you are most likely to vote in the next election.

So, a vital role you can play as a citizen is to write your elected officials about matters that concern you, whether it's to petition your local government for a stop sign at a dangerous intersection or provide your views to national leaders in matters of war and peace. Here are some ways to make your "redress of grievances" as effective as possible.

- **Personal Touch.** Demonstrate how the issue affects you in your life. Give examples. Tell a story.
- **Show Commitment.** The more work you put into your letter, the louder the message will be. A handwritten letter is better than a typed letter, which is better than an e-mail, which is better than a form letter, which is more powerful than signing a petition. No matter what you do, you are likely to be heard.
- **Do Some Research.** Demonstrating that you took the time to gather the facts and figures will also show your commitment.
- **Recruit Your Friends.** Numbers speak volumes. Show your friends and neighbors how this issue affects them and convince them to join you in your efforts. Convince your friends and neighbors to write a letter on the same issue.
- **"I Vote."** Make sure you say that you vote. The elected official will know that you mean business.
- **Write Your Own Representative.** You might read in the newspaper that a Senator or a State Representative far from your home is talking about the issue that you care about. It's fine to communicate with other members of Congress, but it is far more effective to write to your own representatives. They are likely to listen because you have something they want: your vote.
- **Citizen Action Center.** www.constitutioncenter.org has a user-friendly feature to help you write your public officials in its Citizen Action Center. It has the names and addresses of your representatives and a way you can automatically send him or her an e-mail. It also has information on how to reach the news media in your area if you organize an event or a protest meeting. Click [Citizen Action Center](#)

Developed by the [National Constitution Center](http://www.nationalconstitutioncenter.org) in collaboration with the Committee of Seventy, a not-for-profit, non-partisan political watchdog organization dedicated to advancing good government since 1904, www.seventy.org.

A Founding Father's Dictionary

The framers wrote the Constitution to be clear-- a concise framework for a new government for a new union of people. It has endured more than 200 years with only 27 amendments, including the first ten, which we know as the Bill of Rights. Trouble is, the Constitution was written by eighteenth-century politicians and thus the document can present some challenges for the modern reader. Some of the words it uses are spelled differently than they are today, some have different meanings than they do in their modern usage, and some are entirely new—or antique—to us. We hope that this Constitutional Dictionary will help to make our great founding document accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

Abridge: To cut short, limit, or curtail. The First Amendment prohibits Congress from making a law that **abridges** the freedom of speech (amend. I).

Accuse: To formally charge an individual with wrongdoing. The Sixth Amendment guarantees the **accused** a speedy public trial by an impartial jury (amend. VI).

Adhere: To remain devoted to or be in support of something. One of the definitions for treason in the Constitution involves **adhering** to enemies of the United States (art. 3, § 3, cl. 1).

Adjourn: To suspend until a later, stated time. Before a Congressional recess begins or a two-year Congressional session ends, Congress must first **adjourn** their proceedings, usually by majority vote (art. 1, § 5, cl. 1).

Advice and consent: The power of the Senate to evaluate the President's powers of appointment and treaty-making. The President may appoint a Supreme Court Justice or Ambassador, or make a treaty with another nation, but only with the **advice and consent** of the Senate (art. 2, § 2, cl. 2).

Affirmation: A solemn declaration given in place of a statement sworn to God. The Constitution requires that many government officials swear an oath or **affirmation** swearing to uphold it before taking office (art. 6, cl. 3).

Ambassador: A diplomatic official of the highest rank appointed and accredited as representative in residence by one government or sovereign to another. The President has the power to appoint **ambassadors** with the advice and consent of the Senate (art. 2, § 2, cl. 2).

Amendment: An alteration or change to a proposed law or the Constitution. The Constitution currently has twenty-seven amendments. A Constitutional **Amendment** requires ratification by three fourths of the states in order to become law (art. 5).

Appellate: Having the power to review decisions of lower courts. The Supreme Court is the highest **appellate** court in the United States (art. 3, § 2, cl. 1).

Apportion: To divide and assign responsibilities, powers and benefits. The number of members of the House of Representatives a state will have is **apportioned** based on its population. (art.1, § 2; amend. XIV, cl. 2).

Arms: Weapons. The Second Amendment guarantees the right to bear **arms** (amend. II).

Arsenal: A governmental establishment for the storing, development, manufacturing, testing, or repairing of arms, ammunition and other war material. Congress is empowered to establish **arsenals** on land it purchases with the consent of a state (art. 1, § 8, cl. 17).

Ascertain: To determine, make sure of or certify. The Sixth Amendment guarantees a criminal defendant the right to be tried in the district in which the alleged crime was committed, as **ascertained** by law (amend. VI).

Assemble: To gather together, congregate. Under the First Amendment the government cannot abridge the right of the people to **assemble** (amend. I).

Attainder, bill of: A law or regulation that has a negative effect on a person or group and that diminishes their rights, including fine, imprisonment, or execution. The Constitution bars the congress from passing **bills of attainder** (art. 1, § 9, cl. 2).

Attainder of treason: A law or regulation that specifies the punishment or curtailment of rights as penalty for treason. The Constitution empowers Congress to pass **attainders of treason**, but prohibits it from including corruption of blood as a punishment. (art. 3, § 3, cl. 2)

Bail: Security, usually a sum of money, exchanged for the release of an arrested person as a guarantee of that person's appearance for trial. The Eighth Amendment forbids excessive **bail** to be assigned against a criminal defendant. (amend. VIII).

Bankruptcy: Determined to be financially insolvent. Congress is granted the authority to pass uniform laws defining and regulating **bankruptcy** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 4).

Bill: A draft of a proposed law presented for approval to a legislative body. The Constitution requires that all **bills** for raising revenue originate in the House of Representatives (art. 1, § 7, cl. 1).

Bill of Rights: The first ten Amendments to the Constitution recognize in the American people a set of rights. The 10th **bill of right** says that powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved for the states, creating the concept of federalism, or the people (amend. X).

Branch: A part of a complex unit or system. The United States government is divided into three of these: Under the Constitution, there are the legislative, judicial, and executive **branches** (art. 1, § 1; art. 2, § 1; art. 3, § 1).

Capitation: A payment or tax of a fixed amount per person. The Constitution prohibits the levying of any direct tax or **capitation** unless it comes in proportion to an official U.S. census (art. 1, § 9, cl. 4).

Cession: The act of yielding or granting something, such as land or territory. Congress is granted full legislative powers over the district which, by **cession** of its home state, becomes the seat of the federal government (art. 1, § 8, cl. 17).

Chuse: An alternate spelling used for the word “choose” in the days of the framers. The House and Senate must **chuse** their officers from amongst their ranks (art. 1, § 2, cl. 5; art. 1, § 3, cl. 5).

Clause: A distinct article, stipulation, or provision in a document. Some of the only **clauses** not open to Amendment deal with the importation of slaves prior to 1818 and free trade between states (art. 5).

Commerce: The buying and selling of goods, especially on a large scale, as between cities or nations. The **Commerce** Clause of the Constitution gives the federal government power to regulate **commerce** between the states (art. 1, § 8, cl. 3).

Compulsory: Mandatory, obligatory, or required. The Sixth Amendment guarantees a criminal defendant **compulsory** means for obtaining witnesses in his favor (amend. VI).

Concurrence: To have the same opinion; agree. To impeach an official, at least two thirds of the Senate must be in **concurrence** on his or her guilt (art. 1, § 3, cl. 6).

Confederation: A group of smaller, organized entities. No state has the right to enter independently into any treaty, alliance, or **confederation** (art. 1, § 10, cl. 1).

Congress: A formal assembly of representatives to discuss problems. **Congress** is usually used as another word for the whole legislative branch, including the House of Representatives and the Senate (art. 1, § 1).

Consul: Not quite an Ambassador, a **consul** is an official appointed by a government to reside in a foreign country and represent his or her government's commercial interests and assist its citizens there. In judicial cases where one of the parties is an ambassador or **consul**, the Supreme Court is granted original jurisdiction (art. 3, § 2, cl. 1).

Controul: An old spelling of the word “control.” The Constitution grants the Congress full revision and **controul** over any duties or imposts on imports or exports enacted by any state (art. 1, § 10, cl. 2).

Corruption of blood: An English penalty for treason, in which the accused would be forbidden to pass on wealth or property to heirs. This type of punishment was often inflicted on people still loyal to the English crown in the period after U.S. independence, but before the ratification of the Constitution. The Constitution contains an explicit ban on the use of the punishment of **corruption of blood** (art. 3, § 3, cl. 2).

Counsel: A lawyer or group of lawyers giving legal advice and especially conducting a case in court. The Sixth Amendment specifies that the accused in a criminal case has the right to legal **counsel** (amend. VI).

Counterfeit: To make a copy of, usually with the intent to defraud; forge. Congress has the power to specify the punishment for the **counterfeiting** of U.S. currency and securities (art. 1, § 8, cl. 6).

Credit: In the context of the Constitution, the element of reciprocity towards the actions of another entity. One state is obliged to give full faith and **credit** to the actions of another (art. 4, § 1).

Debt: Something owed, such as money, goods, or services. One of the powers and duties of Congress is to pay the national **debt** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 1).

Defence: This word is commonly spelled “defense” today, though still spelled by the British this way. In the Constitution, “common **defence**” refers to the military protection of the United States and its citizens. Also, a criminal defendant has a right to counsel to assist in his **defence** (preamble; amend. VI).

Delegate: To assign a task or duty to a subordinate or agent. The Tenth Amendment specifies that the rights not explicitly **delegated** to the federal government by the Constitution are reserved for the states and the people (amend. X).

Deprive: To take something away from or dispossess. The Fifth Amendment states that U.S. citizens may not be **deprived** of life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness without due process of law (amend. V).

District: A division of an area for administrative purposes. Each member of the House of Representatives is assigned his or her own Congressional **District**. The Twenty-Third Amendment grants the **District** of Columbia, the current seat of the federal government, representation in presidential elections (amend. XXIII).

Domestic: Of or relating to a country’s internal affairs. One of the purposes of the Constitution is to safeguard against **domestic** violence or civil war (art. 4, § 4).

Due process: Before an individual's rights (to freedom or property, for example) are affected, there must be a way to adjudicate those rights. **Due process** includes the right to a fair, speedy, and public trial, the right to defend oneself against charges, the right to an impartial jury and the right to a proceeding before the government takes one's property. The Fourteenth Amendment prohibits any state from depriving a person of life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness without **due process** of law (amend. IV, cl. 1).

Duties: A tax charged by a government, especially on imports. Congress is prohibited from laying taxes or **duties** on any export from one state to another (art. 1, § 9, cl. 5).

Elector: **Electors** are members of the Electoral College, the body that elects the President in each state based on the winner of the popular vote. The Constitution requires each state to choose for presidential elections a number of **electors** equal to the sum of their apportioned representatives and senators (art. 2, § 1, cl. 2).

Eligible: Qualified or entitled to be chosen. If a candidate fulfills the Constitutional qualifications for an office, he or she can be considered **eligible** for that office. One must be 35 and a natural born citizen to be **eligible** to take the office of President (art. 2, § 1, cl. 4).

Emolument: The compensation for employment or service, such as salary or fees. The President is prohibited from receiving any **emolument** from the federal government or any state, other than official compensation for holding the office of President (art. 2, § 1, cl. 5).

Enumeration: 1) To count off or name one by one. The Ninth Amendment declares that the **enumeration** of certain rights of the people in the Constitution should not be taken to deny or disparage other rights they may have (amend. IX).
2) To determine the number of; count. The Constitution calls for an **enumeration** of the citizens within three years of the first meeting of the Congress in order to determine representation in the House for each state, and then every ten years after that. (art. 1, § 2; amend. XVI).

Ex post facto: Formulated, enacted, or operating retroactively. Congress is banned from passing **ex post facto** laws (art. 1, § 9, cl. 3).

Excise: An internal tax imposed on the production, sale, or consumption of a commodity or the use of a service within a country. Among the powers of Congress is to collect imposts, taxes, duties, and **excises** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 1).

Exclusive: Not divided or shared with others. Congress is empowered to give innovators or inventors a period of **exclusive** rights to the use of their creations (art. 1, § 8, cl. 8).

Executive: Of or relating to administrative management and the enforcement of laws. The **Executive** branch is responsible for the management of the government's affairs and enforcement of laws (art. 2, § 1).

Expenditure: The act or process of spending money or resources; outlay. Congress is required to publish a statement of the receipts and **expenditures** of the federal government from time to time (art. 1, § 9, cl. 7).

Export: To send or transport (a commodity, for example) abroad, especially for trade or sale. The Eighteenth Amendment banned the sale, manufacture, or **exportation** of alcoholic beverages (amend. XVIII).

Extradition: Legal surrender of a criminal defendant to the jurisdiction of another state, country, or government for trial. The states are required under the Constitution to **extradite** criminals to the state in which they stand accused (art. 4, § 4, cl. 2).

Felony: One of several grave crimes, such as murder, rape, or burglary, punishable by a more stringent sentence than that given for a misdemeanor. During Congressional sessions, members of Congress are privileged from arrest for any crime less serious than treason, **felony**, or breach of the peace (art. 1, § 6, cl. 1).

Forfeiture: The loss of a right, money, or especially property because of one's criminal act, default, or failure or neglect to perform a duty. The Constitution limits the punitive use of **forfeiture** to the lifetime of the person punished (art. 3, § 3, cl. 2).

Grand Jury: A group of persons convened in private session to evaluate accusations against persons charged with crime and to determine whether the evidence warrants a bill of indictment. The Fifth Amendment guarantees that no person can be charged with a capital crime unless first indicted by a **grand jury** (amend. 5).

Grievance: An actual or supposed circumstance regarded as just cause for complaint. The First Amendment recognizes the right of the people to petition the government for redress of **grievances** (amend. I).

Habeas Corpus: A principle stating that no person can be held against their will without just cause being shown. In Latin, the words "**Habeas Corpus**" mean "having the body." Congress is prohibited from suspending **Habeas Corpus** unless in cases of invasion or rebellion (art. 1, § 9, cl. 2).

House of Representatives: The house of the legislative branch which is designed to be reflective of the people's desires. **Representatives** are chosen from a district in a state and the number of Representatives for each state is determined primarily by population (art. 1, § 2, cl. 3).

Impartial: Not biased or prejudiced. The Fifth Amendment guarantees an individual's right to be tried by an **impartial** jury (amend. V).

Impeachment: To charge a public official with improper conduct in office before a tribunal. In an **impeachment**, like in a criminal trial, the accused may be convicted (found guilty) or acquitted (found not guilty). The House **impeaches** an individual while the trial is conducted in the Senate, with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court presiding as judge. (art. 1, § 2, cl. 5; art. 1, § 3, cl. 6).

Import: To bring or carry in from an outside source, especially to bring in (goods or materials) from a foreign country for trade or sale. The Constitution prohibited the Congress from banning the importation of slaves before the year 1818 (art. 1, § 9, cl. 1).

Impost: A set tax or duty. The Congress may pass **imposts** on imports or exports, but they must be uniform throughout the United States (art. 1, § 8, cl. 1).

Income: The amount of money or its equivalent received during a period of time in exchange for labor or services, from the sale of goods or property, or as profit from financial investments. The Sixteenth Amendment enabled the government to levy a federal **income** tax (amend. XVI).

Indictment: A written statement charging a party with the commission of a crime or other offense, drawn up by a prosecuting attorney and found and presented by a grand jury. If a government officer is impeached and convicted, he is then subject to **indictment** by a grand jury (art. 1, § 3, cl. 7).

Infamous: Punishable by severe measures, such as death, long imprisonment, or loss of civil rights. Treason is an **infamous** crime. The Fifth Amendment protects all persons from being accused of **infamous** crimes unless on indictment by a grand jury (amend. V).

Infringe: Violate, transgress, or encroach. The Second Amendment declares that the right to bear arms shall not be **infringed** (amend. II).

Inhabitant: Resident or occupant. To be eligible for Congressional office, a candidate must be an **inhabitant** of the state he or she wishes to serve (art. 1, § 2, cl. 2; art. 1, § 3, cl. 3).

Insurrection: The act or an instance of open revolt against civil authority or a constituted government. The Constitution authorizes Congress to use military force to put down **insurrections** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 15).

Intoxicating: To stupefy or excite by a chemical substance. The Eighteenth Amendment banned the sale of **intoxicating** liquors. The 21st Amendment repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, allowing intoxicating beverages to be produced, imported, transported and drunk (amend. XVIII; XXI).

Involuntary servitude: The state of being held or detained for purposes of labor against one's will under the threat of force or other coercion. The Thirteenth Amendment prohibits any citizen to be held in slavery or **involuntary servitude** (amend. XIII).

Jeopardy: Danger, risk, or peril. The Fifth Amendment prohibits any person from being put in double **jeopardy**--that is, being tried for the same crime twice (amend. V).

Judicial: Branch of government relating to courts of law and the administration of justice. The power of the **judicial** branch of the U.S. government is vested in the Supreme Court and in "inferior" courts established by Congress (art. 3, § 1).

Jurisdiction: The power, right, or authority to act in a certain area or subject matter. For example, federal courts have **jurisdiction** over certain criminal matters and civil ones where there is an interstate context. A place can be a **jurisdiction**, too (art. 3, § 2, cl. 2).

Jury: A body of persons summoned by law and sworn to hear and hand down a verdict upon a case presented in court. Under the Sixth amendment, an accused person has the right to have his trial heard by an impartial **jury** (amend. VI).

Lay: To impose or levy, as a burden or tax. The 16th Amendment empowered the Congress to **lay** and collect taxes on incomes (amend. XVI).

Legislative: The branch of government which considers and enacts the laws of the land. The **legislative** power of the federal government is vested in the Congress (art. 1, § 1).

Letter of Marque: Document issued by a nation to a privateer or mercenary to act on the behalf of that nation for the purpose of retaliating against another nation for some wrong, such as a border incursion or seizure. The Constitution empowers Congress to issue **letters of marque** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 11).

Levy: To impose taxes, or to wage war. One of the Constitutional definitions of treason is **levying** war on the United States (art. 3, § 3, cl. 1).

Liable: At risk or subject to a responsibility. A government officer who has been impeached and convicted is subsequently **liable** to trial and punishment under law (art. 1, § 3, cl. 7).

Magazine: A place where goods are stored, especially a building in a fort or a storeroom on a warship where ammunition is kept. The Constitution empowers the Congress to purchase land from the states to establish **magazines** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 17).

Migration: Movement from one country or region and settlement in another. The Constitution's reference to **migration** and importation persons is a reference to the slave trade (art. 1, § 9, cl. 1).

Misdemeanor: An offense less grave than a felony. The President may be impeached for "high crimes and **misdemeanors**" (art. 2, § 4).

Militia: An army composed of ordinary citizens rather than professional soldiers. The Second Amendment, apart from guaranteeing the right to bear arms, also mentions that a well-regulated **militia** is necessary to the security of a free State (amend. II).

Minister: An authorized diplomatic representative of a government, usually ranking next below an ambassador. The Constitution empowers the President to receive foreign ambassadors and **ministers** (art. 2, § 3).

Naturalization: To grant full citizenship to one of foreign birth. It is the responsibility of Congress to establish uniform rules of **naturalization** throughout the U.S. (art. 1, § 8, cl. 4).

Nay: A "no" vote in legislative proceedings. Each house of Congress is required to keep a journal recording yea or **nay** votes in its proceedings (art. 1, § 5, cl. 3).

Nobility, title of: A written document or certificate granting special social, financial, or governmental status to a person or family, which also applies hereditarily to offspring and future descendants. The Constitution prohibits the federal government from granting any **title of nobility** (art. 1, § 9, cl. 8).

Oath: A solemn, formal declaration or promise to fulfill a pledge or speak truthfully, often calling on God, a god, or a sacred object as witness. Witnesses in court proceedings are often asked to testify under **oath** and individuals elected or appointed to serve in a high or important position are required to take an **oath** of office (art. 1, §3; art. 2, § 1, cl. 7).

Objection: A ground, reason, or cause for expressing opposition. If the President does not approve of a bill passed by Congress, he has the option of vetoing it or returning it to Congress for reconsideration with a list of his or her **objections** to the bill (art. 1, § 7, cl. 2).

Office: A position of authority, duty, or trust. The Constitution prohibits any person holding governmental **office** to receive a gift or reward from a foreign ruler (art. 1, §9, cl. 8).

Ordain: To order by official decree. The Constitution empowers the Congress to **ordain** and establish courts inferior to the Supreme Court (art. 3, § 1).

Pardon: To release a person from punishment; exempt from penalty. The President has the power to issue **pardons** (art. 2, § 2, cl. 1).

Petition: A request made to a superior authority; an entreaty. The First Amendment grants the people the right to **petition** the government for redress of grievances (amend. I).

Piracy: Robbery committed at sea. The Constitution empowers Congress to define the punishments for **piracy** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 14).

Poll tax: A fee or payment demanded in exchange for the right to vote. **Poll taxes**, which were often imposed to discourage African Americans from voting, were forbidden in the Twenty-Fourth Amendment (amend. XIV).

Post road: A route over which mail is carried. The Constitution empowers the Congress to establish **post roads** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 7).

Posterity: Preserved for future generations. The values cited in the Constitution were meant for the makers of the Constitution and our **Posterity** (preamble).

Preamble: A preliminary statement, especially the introduction to a formal document that serves to explain its purpose. The body of the Constitution is preceded by its **preamble**.

Presentment: The act of submitting or presenting a formal statement of a legal matter to a court or an authorized person. The Fifth Amendment protects all persons from being charged for very serious crimes unless on **presentment** by a grand jury (amend. V).

President: One appointed or elected to preside over an organized body of people. The **President** is the chief executive of the United States and Commander-in-Chief of its military (art. 2, § 1).

Proceedings: Formal business conducted by an official body. The Constitution requires that each state give full faith and credit to any acts, records, and **proceedings** of any other state (art. 4, § 1).

Pro tempore: Temporary. If the Vice President is unavailable or unable to fulfill his duty as President of the Senate, the Senate chooses a President **pro tempore** among its own ranks (art. 1, § 3, cl. 4).

Probable cause: Reasonable grounds for believing that an accused person may be subject to arrest or the basis for issuing a search or arrest warrant. A search warrant is only issued with **probable cause**, under the Fourth Amendment (amend. IV).

Prosecute: To initiate criminal or civil court action against. The Sixth Amendment includes several protections for the defendant in criminal **prosecutions** (amend. VI).

Qualifications: Conditions or circumstances that must be complied with. To be elected to any of the offices outlined in the Constitution, one must meet certain **qualifications**. The Constitution also requires that no religious test be used as a **qualification** for any government office (art. 6, cl. 3; amend. XVII).

Quarter: To provide shelter. Prior to the Revolution, British troops were often **quartered** in the homes of American colonists without their consent. In the time of peace, no homeowner can be forced to **quarter** a soldier without their consent, nor can they be in wartime unless defined by law. (amend. III).

Quorum: The number of members required to be present for business to be conducted. For each house of Congress, at least one more than half of the total members must be present to achieve **quorum** (art. 1, § 5, cl. 1).

Ratification: To approve and give formal sanction to; confirm. Constitutional Amendments must be **ratified** by three fourths of the states before they take effect (art. 5).

Recess: Period of time during which Congress is not in session. The Constitution gives the President the power to make an appointment while Congress is in **recess** that would last until the adjournment of that Congressional session (art. 2, § 2, cl. 3).

Receipt: A written acknowledgment that a specified article, sum of money, or shipment of merchandise has been received. The Constitution requires Congress to publish a statement of **receipts** and expenditures from time to time (art. 1, § 9, cl. 7).

Redress: To set right; remedy or rectify. The First Amendment recognizes the right of the people to petition their government for **redress** of grievances (amend. 1).

Reprieve: Postponement or cancellation of a punishment. The Constitution empowers the President to grant **reprieves** to criminal offenders (art. 2, § 2, cl. 1).

Reprisal: An act taken by a nation, short of war, in retaliation for an action taken against that nation. For example, a **reprisal** is seizing a ship in retaliation for a seized ship, and is a power granted to the Congress (art. 1, § 8, cl. 15).

Republican: A government in which supreme power is held by the citizens entitled to vote and is exercised by elected officers and representatives governing according to law. The Constitution guarantees every state a **Republican** form of government (art. IV, § 4).

Resignation: The act of giving up an office or position. In the case of the President's death, removal from office, or **resignation**, the Constitution provides for his succession

by the Vice President (amend. XXV).

Revenue: The income of a government from all sources. The Constitution requires that all bills raising **revenue** must originate in the House of Representatives rather than the Senate (art. 1, § 7, cl. 1).

Securities: Documents indicating ownership or creditorship; stock certificates or bonds. The Constitution empowers Congress to enact laws punishing individuals for the falsification of U.S. **securities** (art. 1, § 8, cl. 6).

Seize: To take into custody or capture. The Fourth Amendment guarantees the right to be free from unreasonable search and **seizure** (amend. IV).

Senate: The body of the legislative branch which was designed to satisfy the challenges of the smaller states because all states, no matter how large or small, would have two **Senators** (art. 1, § 3, cl. 1).

Severally: Respectively distinct and independent. The Constitution often calls the states the “**severally** states” to emphasize their autonomy. It also entitles the citizens of each state all of the privileges and immunities of the **severally** states (art. 4, § 2, cl. 1).

Speaker: The presiding officer of the House of Representatives. The Constitution empowers the House to choose for itself a **Speaker** (art. 1, § 2, cl. 5).

Subsequent: Following in time or order. The Constitution provides for reapportionment of house seats on every **subsequent** term of ten years, based on population data gathered in what is now called a census (art. 1, § 2, cl. 3).

Suffrage: 1) The right or privilege of voting; franchise. The 19th Amendment granted **suffrage** to American women (amend. XIX).

2) A vote cast in a disputed question. The Constitution prohibits the federal government from ever reducing any state’s **suffrage** in the Senate, even by Constitutional Amendment (art. V).

Suit: A court proceeding to recover a right or claim. The Seventh Amendment guarantees the right to a trial by jury in **suits** at common law where a sum greater than twenty dollars is at stake (amend. VII).

Tax: A required contribution for the support of a government. The 16th Amendment authorized the federal government to **tax** Americans’ income (amend. XVI).

Term: The set length of time one may hold an office. The 22nd Amendment prohibits any person from serving more than two full **terms** as President (amend. XXII).

Territory: A subdivision of the United States that is not a state and is administered by an appointed or elected governor and elected legislature. The Constitution empowers the Congress to have full legislative authority over U.S. **territories** (art. 4, § 3, cl. 2).

Tonnage: A charge per ton on shipping cargo, as at a port or canal. The Constitution prohibits the states from levying duties on shipping **tonnage** without the consent of Congress. (art. 1, § 10, cl. 3).

Tranquility: Peace or order. The preamble of the Constitution states that one of its purposes is to ensure domestic **tranquility** (preamble).

Treason: Violation of allegiance toward one's country or sovereign, especially the betrayal of one's country by waging war against it or by consciously and purposely acting to aid its enemies. The Constitution prohibits the conviction of any person for **treason** unless the accused confesses, or two witnesses can be produced attesting to the same overt act (art. 3, § 3, cl. 1).

Tribunal: A committee, court, or board appointed to adjudicate in a particular matter. The Constitution empowers Congress to constitute **tribunals** "inferior" to the Supreme Court (art. 1, § 8, cl. 9).

Union: A combination or alliance formed by people for mutual benefit. The Constitution requires the President to address the Congress from time to time and inform them of the State of the **Union** (art. 2, § 3).

Vacancy: When an office that is unfilled or unoccupied. In the event of a **vacancy** in any state's representation in the Senate, the Constitution calls for that state's executive authority to issue a writ of election to fill that vacancy with a special election by the people. A **vacancy** in the House can be filled only by an election. (art. 1, § 2, cl. 4).

Vessel: A craft, especially one larger than a rowboat, designed to navigate on water. The Constitution prohibits the Congress from enacting laws requiring **vessels** from one state to pay duties for passage in another (art. 1, § 9, cl. 5).

Vested: Settled, fixed, or absolute. The powers of the three branches of the U.S. government are **vested** respectively in the Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court (art. 1, § 1; art. 2, § 1; art. 3, § 1).

Veto: The power of the President to reject a law passed by the legislature and thus prevent its enactment. The President, for example, has power to **veto** bills passed by Congress, and Congress may override a **veto** (art. 2, § 7, cl. 2).

Warrant: A judicial writ authorizing an officer to make a search, seizure, or arrest or to execute a judgment. The Fourth Amendment prohibits the issuance of **warrants** unless there exists probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, describing the place to be searched and the items to be seized (amend. IV).



Welfare: Health, happiness, prosperity, or well-being. The Preamble of the Constitution states that one of its purposes is to promote the general **welfare** (preamble).

Witness: A person called upon to testify before a court. The Fifth Amendment states that no person shall be made to be a **witness** against himself or herself (amend. V).

Writ: A legal and official written form. The Constitution prohibits the government from suspending the **writ** of Habeas Corpus other than in cases of insurrection or invasion (art 1, § 9, cl. 2).

Yea: A “yes” vote in legislative proceedings. Each house of Congress is required to keep a journal recording **yea** or nay votes in its proceedings (art. 1, § 5, cl. 3).

The “Constitutional Dictionary” was developed by the National Constitution Center, Leonardo Rago, author.

Constitution Fun Facts

Advice and Consent at Work. The first Supreme Court appointee to fail to receive the advice and consent of the Senate was anti-Federalist John Rutledge, who was nominated to be Chief Justice by George Washington in 1795. After the vote against him, Rutledge attempted suicide.

Back to Back. George Washington was the tallest delegate to the Constitutional Convention at 6'2". His fellow Virginian James Madison was the shortest at 5'4".

Constitution.com. According to the Online Computer Library Center, the U.S. Constitution is the 257th most sought after document in the libraries worldwide. If you Google "Constitution," you get 57,900,000 hits as of August 10th, 2005.

Deporting Bill Gates? A Constitutional Amendment proposed in 1810 and calls for revocation of citizenship for any American accepting a title of nobility from any foreign state. Just to name a few, this would mean loss of citizenship for President George H. W. Bush, Rudolph Giuliani, Alan Greenspan and Bill Gates, all of whom have been knighted by the United Kingdom, as were President Reagan and Bob Hope.

Eldest and Youngest. At 81, Benjamin Franklin, the "Sage of the Constitutional Convention," was the oldest delegate, and at 26, New Jersey's Jonathon Dayton was the youngest.

First and Last. The first state to ratify the Constitution was Delaware. The last of the original 13 states to ratify was Rhode Island.

Genuine Article: The original, hand-written Constitution is housed in the [National Archives](#) in Washington, D.C. The National Constitution Center holds the first public printing of the document.

Gone Fishin'. Although he was the presiding officer for the Constitutional Convention, George Washington did not actually participate in the debates. During the Convention's recesses, his favorite pastime was fishing in the waters near Valley Forge.

Hold the White-Out: More than 11,000 amendments have been introduced in Congress. Thirty-three have gone to the states to be ratified and 27 have received the necessary approval from the states to become Constitutional Amendments.

Hold the White-Out II. The longest period of time without a Constitutional Amendment was from 1804-1865, between the Twelfth and Thirteenth Amendments, which deal with presidential succession and the abolition of slavery, respectively.

How Big? The Constitution that the Founding Fathers signed is 4,379 words on four 28 3/4" by 23 5/8" sheets of parchment. With all 27 Amendments, it now stands at 8,554 words. This makes the U.S. Constitution the shortest still in use. The longest

national Constitution is India's, boasting over 500,000 words and 92 Amendments. Honorable mention goes to Alabama—their state Constitution weighs in at over 310,000 words and 743 Amendments.

Late but Sure. Three of the original states – Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Georgia – did not get around to ratifying the Bill of Rights until 1791, 150 years after it was originally proposed.

More Than Ten. The Bill of Rights as it was originally proposed to the states contained twelve Amendments rather than the ten we know today. And the First Amendment we cherish so much was relegated to third place. The proposed First Amendment dealt with the ratio of seats in the House of Representatives to state populations. The proposed Second Amendment did not deal with the right to bear arms, but rather the ability of Congress to enact pay raises for its own members. It finally was added to the Constitution in 1791 as the 27th amendment.

Not Attending. Patrick Henry was an elected delegate but declined to serve because he "smelt a rat." Rhode Island did not send a delegate at all because they saw the convention as a conspiracy to overthrow the established government. Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence, was in Paris acting as Ambassador and John Adams, a diplomatic envoy at the time, was in England on business.

Original State of the Union: America's population in 1787 was 4 million. With 40,000 inhabitants Philadelphia was the largest city, and New York was the nation's capital.

Prayer for Peace?: Disagreements at the Convention were so constant and tense that Benjamin Franklin proposed that the delegates start each day with a group prayer—and they couldn't agree on that.

Reinventing Government. In 1791, the President's cabinet contained four departments – State, War, Treasury, and Justice. Today the President packs fifteen cabinet officers around a conference table in what is properly called the White House's "Cabinet Room."

Reversing the Supreme Court. No less than seven constitutional amendments were passed in order to reverse a Supreme Court decision. Some of the notable ones were the Thirteenth Amendment (1865), barring slavery; and the Fifteenth Amendment (1868), protecting the citizenship of African Americans. Both amendments effectively overturned the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision of 1857. The Sixteenth Amendment (1913) gave Congress the power to levy an income tax, thereby overturning *Pollock v. Farmers' Loan and Trust Co.* (1895). And the Twenty-Sixth Amendment (1971) overturned *Oregon v. Mitchell* (1970) which, among other things, held that Congress could not regulate the voting age in state elections. The amendment set the voting age at 18 years.

Senate Selection. Until 1913, Senators were chosen by a state's legislators, rather than the voters at large. Finally, under threat of a Constitutional Convention on the matter, Congress proposed the 17th amendment, which requires the popular election of Senators.

Taxing Amendment. Although many Americans have come to accept it as an integral part of life in the United States, the federal income tax has not always been around. In fact, it is a relatively recent addition, having been introduced with the 16th Amendment in 1913. For its first year, only one percent of the U.S. population was required to pay the new tax.

Timing is Everything. The entire drafting process for the Constitution took only 116 days.

Tough Presidential Marriages. While today the vice presidential candidates are chosen separately by each Presidential candidate, different methods were used in the past. Prior to the passage of the 12th Amendment in 1804, the candidate who came in second in the Presidential election became vice president.

Unconventional at the Convention. Although Ben Franklin had an unconventional gift for invention among all the framers, honorable mention goes to Hugh Williamson of North Carolina, who developed the first American military vaccination program, published articles on astronomy, and believed each planet in the solar system to contain extraterrestrial life.

Unfinished Business. Before 1917, Congress did not place deadlines on Constitutional Amendments that had gone to the states for consideration. As a result, some very old Amendments are still awaiting ratification. The oldest of these is the originally proposed first Amendment (about congressional representation), dating all the way back to 1789.

Voting at Age Ten? While it is commonly believed that the 26th Amendment, ratified in 1971, sets the minimum voting age in all elections at eighteen, this is not actually the case. The amendment in fact only mandates that no state have a voting age older than eighteen. If a state were, for some reason, to make its citizens able to vote at the age of ten, this practice would pass the constitutional test, and those votes would count even in a presidential election. So far, no state has gone below 18.

Weather Report. It was a particularly hot and humid summer in Philadelphia when the framers met, which was compounded by the Constitutional Convention being held indoors. Ben Franklin was known to use a special invention of his to cool off—a rocking chair equipped with a fan powered by its own motion. Still, the framers kept the windows of the meeting room closed to keep the deliberations confidential.

When: The Constitutional Convention began in Philadelphia on May 25, 1787. The document was signed on September 17, and ratified on June 21, 1788.

Where. The Constitutional Convention took place at the State House in Philadelphia, known today as Independence Hall, on Chestnut Street between 5th and 6th, only three blocks away from the National Constitution Center.

Who: 55 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention, but only 42 stayed long enough for approval on the last day, with 39 signing and three dissenting, mainly because the document lacked a bill of rights.

Words to Paper: Jacob Shallus, a Pennsylvania General Assembly clerk, transcribed the Constitution for a fee of \$30, or two-thirds of a cent per word. Perhaps if he had been paid more Shallus would have spelled “Pennsylvania” as we do today instead of “Pensylvania” above the signers’ names. Gouverneur Morris was responsible for the wording of the Constitution, although James Madison is known as the “Father of the Constitution.”

Worth its Weight in Gold. The original Constitution is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, it was moved to Fort Knox for safekeeping.

“Constitution Fun Facts” was developed by the National Constitution Center, Leonardo Rago, author.

A Constitutional Reader

Congresswoman Barbara Jordan's Address during President Nixon's Impeachment Trial

Earlier today, we heard the beginning of the Preamble to the Constitution of the United States, "We, the people." It's a very eloquent beginning. But when that document was completed, on the seventeenth of September in 1787, I was not included in that "We, the people." I felt somehow for many years that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake. But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision, I have finally been included in "We, the people."

---Barbara Jordan. "Opening Statement to the House Judiciary Committee, Proceedings on the Impeachment of Richard Nixon." United States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 25 July, 1974.

Senator Margaret Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience"

I think that it is high time that we remembered that we have sworn to uphold and defend the Constitution. I think that it is high time that we remembered that the Constitution, as amended, speaks not only of the freedom of speech but also of trial by jury instead of trial by accusation.

Whether it be a criminal prosecution in court or a character prosecution in the Senate, there is little practical distinction when the life of a person has been ruined.

Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all too frequently those who, by our own words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism:

The right to criticize;

The right to hold unpopular beliefs;

The right to protest;

The right of independent thought.

The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his reputation or his right to a livelihood nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation or livelihood merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs. Who of us doesn't? Otherwise none of us could call our souls our own. Otherwise thought control would have set in.

--- Margaret Chase Smith. "Declaration of Conscience." U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 1 June 1950.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "The Four Freedoms" Speech

Let us say to the democracies: "We Americans are vitally concerned in your defense of freedom. We are putting forth our energies, our resources, and our organizing powers to give you the strength to regain and maintain a free world. We shall send you in ever-increasing numbers, ships, planes, tanks, guns. This is our purpose and our pledge.

The nation takes great satisfaction and much strength from the things which have been done to make its people conscious of their individual stake in the preservation of democratic life in America. Those things have toughened the fiber of our people, have renewed their faith and strengthened their devotion to the institutions we make ready to protect.

Certainly this is no time for any of us to stop thinking about the social and economic problems which are the root cause of the social revolution which is today a supreme factor in the world. For there is nothing mysterious about the foundations of a healthy and strong democracy.

The basic things expected by our people of their political and economic systems are simple. They are:

Equality of opportunity for youth and for others.

Jobs for those who can work.

Security for those who need it.

The ending of special privilege for the few.

The preservation of civil liberties for all.

The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living.

These are the simple, the basic things that must never be lost sight of in the turmoil and unbelievable complexity of our modern world. The inner and abiding straight of our economic and political systems is dependent upon the degree to which they fulfill these expectations.

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is freedom of speech and expression--everywhere in the world.

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want, which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants--everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear, which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor -- anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation. That kind of world is the very antithesis of the so-called "new order" of tyranny which the dictators seek to create with the crash of a bomb.

To that new order we oppose the greater conception -- the moral order. A good society is able to face schemes of world domination and foreign revolutions alike without fear.

--- Franklin Delano Roosevelt. "The Four Freedoms." U.S. Congress, Washington, D.C. 6 January 1941.

Lyndon Baines Johnson 1965 Inaugural Address

In each generation, with toil and tears, we have had to earn our heritage again.

If we fail now, then we will have forgotten in abundance what we learned in hardship: that democracy rests on faith, that freedom asks more than it gives, and the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored.

If we succeed, it will not be because of what we have, but it will be because of what we are; not because of what we own, but, rather because of what we believe.

For we are a nation of believers. Underneath the clamor of building and the rush of our day's pursuits, we are believers in justice and liberty and union, and in our own Union. We believe that every man must someday be free. And we believe in ourselves.

And that is the mistake our enemies have always made. In my lifetime -- in depression and in war -- they have awaited our defeat. Each time, from the secret places of the American heart, came forth the faith that they could not see or that they could not even imagine. And it brought us victory. And it will again.

For this is what America is all about.

--- Lyndon Baines Johnson. "Inaugural Address." Washington, D.C. 20 January 1965.

Walt Whitman's Poem, "For You, O Democracy"

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble,
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever shone upon,
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all rivers
of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and
all over the prairies,
I will make inseparable cities with their arms about each
other's necks,
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.
For you these from me, O Democracy, to serve you ma femme!
For you, for you I am trilling these songs.

--- Walt Whitman. "For You, O Democracy." *Leaves of Grass*. Brooklyn: Fowler & Wells, 1856.

Judge Learned Hand's Central Park Speech, "The Spirit of Liberty"

What do we mean when we say that first of all we seek liberty? I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it

dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it...

What is the spirit of liberty? I cannot define it; I can only tell you my own faith. The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias; the spirit of liberty remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded; the spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, near two thousand years ago, taught mankind that lesson it has never learned, but has never quite forgotten; that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest.

--- Judge Learned Hand. "The Sprit of Liberty." New York City. 21 May 1944.

President Ronald Reagan's Address at Moscow State University

The key is freedom -- freedom of thought, freedom of information, freedom of communication ... We Americans make no secret of our belief in freedom. In fact, it's something of a national pastime... Freedom is the right to question, and change the established way of doing things. It is the continuing revolution of the marketplace. It is the understanding that allows us to recognize shortcomings and seek solutions. It is the right to put forth an idea, scoffed at by the experts, and watch it catch fire among the people. It is the right to follow your dream, to stick to your conscience, even if you're the only one in a sea of doubters.

Freedom is the recognition that no single person, no single authority or government has a monopoly on the truth, but that every individual life is infinitely precious, that every one of us put on this earth has been put here for a reason and has something to offer...

Let me cite one of the most eloquent contemporary passages on human freedom. It comes not from the literature of America, but from this country, from one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century, Boris Pasternak...He writes, "I think that if the beast who sleeps in man could be held down by threats -- any kind of threat, whether of jail or of retribution after death -- then the highest emblem of humanity would be the lion tamer in the circus with his whip, not the prophet who sacrificed himself. But this is just the point -- what has for centuries raised man above the beast is not the cudgel, but an inward music -- the irresistible power of unarmed truth."

--- Ronald Reagan. Moscow State University, Moscow. 31 May 1988.

Congresswoman Barbara Jordan's Address at the Democratic National Convention

A Nation is formed by the willingness of each of us to share in the responsibility for upholding the common good. A government is invigorated when each of us is willing to participate in shaping the future of this nation... [W]e must define the common *good* and begin again to shape a common future. Let each person do his or her part. If one citizen is unwilling to participate, all of us are going to suffer. For the American idea, though it is shared by all of us, is realized in each one of us...

Let there be no illusions about the difficulty of forming this kind of national community. It's tough, difficult, not easy. But a spirit of harmony will survive in America only if each of us remembers that we share a common destiny. If each of us remembers when self-interest and bitterness seem to prevail that we share a common destiny.

I have a confidence that we can form this kind of national community.

I have that confidence.

We cannot improve on the system of government handed down to us by the founders of the Republic. There is no way to improve upon that. But what we can do is find new ways to implement that system and realize our destiny.

--- Barbara Jordan. "Who Then Will Speak for the Common Good?" Democratic Convention, New York. 12 July 1976.

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream"

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

--- Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have a Dream." Washington, D.C. 28 August 1963.

Susan B. Anthony "On Women's Right to Vote" at Her Trial

The spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this government, [were] based on the immutable principle of equal rights to all...It was we, the people, not we, the white male citizens; nor we the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed this Union. We formed it not to give the blessings of liberty but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people -- women as well as men. It is downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government -- the ballot...

Since the beginning of our American history we have been engaged in change, in a perpetual, peaceful revolution, a revolution which goes on steadily, quietly, adjusting itself to changing conditions without the concentration camp or the quick-lime in the ditch. The world order which we seek is the co-operation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society.

This nation has placed its destiny in the hands, heads and hearts of its millions of free men and women, and its faith in freedom under the guidance of God. Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights and keep them. Our strength is in our unity of purpose.

To that high concept there can be no end save victory.

--- Susan B Anthony. "On Women's Right to Vote." United States v. Susan B. Anthony, New York. 1873.

Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address

Let us, then, fellow-citizens, unite with one heart and one mind. Let us restore to social intercourse that harmony and affection without which liberty and even life itself are but dreary things...

Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists. I believe this ... the strongest Government on earth. I believe it the only one where every man, at the call of the law, would fly to the standard of the law, and would meet invasions of the public order as his own personal concern. Sometimes it is said that man can not be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question....

The essential principles of our Government ... should be the creed of our political faith, the text of civic instruction, the touchstone by which to try the services of those we trust; and should we wander from them in moments of error or of alarm, let us hasten to retrace our steps and to regain the road which alone leads to peace, liberty, and safety...

--- Thomas Jefferson. "First Inaugural Address." Washington, D.C. 4 March 1801.

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter From Birmingham Jail"

We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of bad people, but for the appalling silence of good people. We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work time itself becomes an ally of forces of social stagnation...

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The urge for freedom will eventually come. This is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom; something without has reminded him that he can gain it...

But as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a bit of satisfaction from being considered an extremist. Was not Jesus an extremist in love? "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice -- "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the gospel of Jesus Christ -- "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist -- "Here I stand; I can do none other so help me God." Was not John Bunyan an extremist -- "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." Was not Abraham Lincoln an extremist -- "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." Was not Thomas Jefferson an extremist -- "We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal."

So the question is not whether we will be extremists but what kind of extremist will we be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice-or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?

--- Martin Luther King Jr. "Letter From Birmingham Jail." Alabama, 16 April 1963.

President Andrew Shepherd's Remarks to the Press in "The American President"

America isn't easy. America is advanced citizenship. You've gotta want it bad, cause it's gonna put up a fight. It's gonna say, "You want free speech? Let's see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who's standing center stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours." You want to claim this land as the land of the free? Then the symbol of your country cannot just be a flag. The symbol also has to be one of its citizens exercising his right to burn that flag in protest. Now show me that, defend that, celebrate that in your classrooms. Then you can stand up and sing about the land of the free.

--- The American President. Dir. Rob Reiner, 1992.

Frederick Douglass "The Meaning of July Fourth for the American Negro"

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim....There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour....Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented, of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery "The arm of the Lord is not shortened," and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope."

--- Frederick Douglass. "The Meaning of July Fourth for the American Negro."
Rochester. 5 July 1852.

Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address"

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

--- Abraham Lincoln. "Gettysburg Address." Gettysburg. 19 November 1863.



Langston Hughes' Poem "Let America Be America Again"

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed –
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

--- Langston Hughes. "Let America Be America Again." *Esquire*. 1938.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's "Fireside Chat on Reorganization of the Judiciary"

It is the American people themselves who are in the driver's seat. It is the American people themselves who want the furrow plowed. It is the American people themselves who expect the third horse to fall in unison with the other two.

I hope that you have re-read the Constitution of the United States in these past few weeks. Like the Bible, it ought to be read again and again.

--- Franklin Delano Roosevelt. "Fireside Chat on Reorganization of the Judiciary." Washington, D.C. 9 March 1937.

President Ronald Reagan's "Farewell Address"

Ours was the first revolution in the history of mankind that truly reversed the course of government, and with three little words: 'We the People.' 'We the People' tell the government what to do; it doesn't tell us. 'We the People' are the driver; the government is the car. And we decide where it should go, and by what route, and how fast. Almost all the world's constitutions are documents in which governments tell the people what their privileges are. Our Constitution is a document in which 'We the People' tell the government what it is allowed to do. 'We the People' are free.

I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here. That's how I saw it, and see it still.

And how stands the city on this winter night? More prosperous, more secure, and happier than it was 8 years ago. But more than that: After 200 years, two centuries, she still stands strong and true on the granite ridge, and her glow has held steady no matter what storm. And she's still a

beacon, still a magnet for all who must have freedom, for all the pilgrims from all the lost places who are hurtling through the darkness, toward home.

--- Ronald Reagan. "Farewell Address." Oval Office, Washington, D.C. 11 January 1989.

Harold Ickes' Central Park Speech, "What is an American?"

What constitutes an American? Not color nor race nor religion. Not the pedigree of his family nor the place of his birth. Not the coincidence of his citizenship. Not his social status nor his bank account. Not his trade nor his profession. An American is one who loves justice and believes in the dignity of man. An American is one who will fight for his freedom and that of his neighbor. An American is one who will sacrifice property, ease and security in order that he and his children may retain the rights of free men. An American is one in whose heart is engraved the immortal second sentence of the Declaration of Independence.

Americans have always known how to fight for their rights and their way of life. Americans are not afraid to fight. They fight joyously in a just cause.

We Americans know that freedom, like peace, is indivisible. We cannot retain our liberty if three-fourths of the world is enslaved. Brutality, injustice and slavery, if practiced as dictators would have them, universally and systematically, in the long run would destroy us as surely as a fire raging in our nearby neighbor's house would burn ours if we didn't help to put out his.

--- Harold Ickes. "What is an American?" New York. 18 May 1941.

Justice Louis D. Brandeis in "Olmstead v. United States"

The makers of our constitution undertook to secure conditions favorable to the pursuit of happiness... They sought to protect Americans in their beliefs, their thoughts, their emotions and their sensations. They conferred, as against the government, the right to be let alone, the most comprehensive of the rights and the right most valued by civilized men.

--- Louis D Brandeis. "Olmstead V. United States." U.S. Supreme Court. Washington, D.C. 4 June 1928.

Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man"

It has been thought a considerable advance towards establishing the principles of Freedom, to say, that government is a compact between those who govern and those that are governed: but this cannot be true, because it is putting the effect before the cause; for as man must have existed before governments existed, there necessarily was a time when governments did not exist, and consequently there could originally exist no governors to form such a compact with. The fact therefore must be, that the individuals themselves, each in his own personal and sovereign right, entered into a compact with each other to produce a government: and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist.

--- Thomas Paine. "The Rights of Man." 1791-1792.



George H. W. Bush's 1992 State of the Union Address

Freedom and the power to choose should not be the privilege of wealth. They are the birthright of every American.

--- George Herbert Walker Bush. "Third State of the Union Address." Washington, D.C. 28 January 1992.

Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

My kind of loyalty was to one's country, not to its institutions or its officeholders. The country is the real thing, the substantial thing, the eternal thing; it is the thing to watch over, and care for, and be loyal to; institutions are extraneous, they are its mere clothing, and clothing can wear out, become ragged, cease to be comfortable, cease to protect the body from winter, disease, and death.

--- Mark Twain. *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. 1889.

Samuel Adams's article in the *Boston Gazette*

The liberties of our country, the freedom of our civil Constitution, are worth defending at all hazards; and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair inheritance from our worthy ancestors: they purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood, and transmitted them to us with care and diligence. It will bring an everlasting mark of infamy on the present generation, enlightened as it is, if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle, or to be cheated out of them by the artifices of false and designing men.

--- Samuel Adams. *Boston Gazette*, 1771.

Clarence Darrow's Address at the Funeral of John P. Altgeld

Liberty is the most jealous and exacting mistress that can beguile the brain and soul of man. From him who will not give her all, she will have nothing. She knows that his pretended love serves but to betray. But when once the fierce heat of her quenchless, lustrous eyes have burned into the victim's heart, he will know no other smile but hers. . . . You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free.

--- Clarence Darrow. "Address by Clarence Darrow at the Funeral of John P. Altgeld." 14 March 1902.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., *Elsie Venner*

Liberty is often a heavy burden on a man. It involves the necessity for perpetual choice which is the kind of labor men have always dreaded.

--- Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. *Elsie Venner*. *Atlantic Monthly*. 1859.

President John Adams' Inaugural Address

Employed in the service of my country abroad during the whole course of these transactions, I first saw the Constitution of the United States in a foreign country. Irritated by no literary altercation, animated by no public debate, heated by no party animosity, I read it with great satisfaction, as the result of good heads prompted by good hearts, as an experiment better adapted to the genius, character, situation, and relations of this nation and country than any which had ever been proposed or suggested. , , , With this great example before me, with the sense and spirit, the faith and honor, the duty and interest, of the same American people pledged to support the Constitution of the United States, I entertain no doubt of its continuance in all its energy, and my mind is prepared without hesitation to lay myself under the most solemn obligations to support it to the utmost of my power.

--- John Adams. "Inaugural Address." Philadelphia. 4 March 1797.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's Speech before the Republican National Convention

Everything I have -- my career, my success, my family -- I owe to America. In this country, it doesn't make any difference where you were born. It doesn't make any difference who your parents were. It doesn't make any difference if you're like me and you couldn't even speak English until you were in your twenties. America gave me opportunities and my immigrant dreams came true. I want other people to get the same chances I did, the same opportunities. And I believe they can. That's why I believe in this country.

--- Arnold Schwarzenegger. "Republican National Convention Address." New York. 1 September 2004.

Barack Obama's Speech at the Democratic National Convention

Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our Nation — not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

That is the true genius of America, a faith -- a faith in simple dreams, an insistence on small miracles; that we can tuck in our children at night and know that they are fed and clothed and safe from harm; that we can say what we think, write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door; that we can have an idea and start our own business without paying a bribe; that we can participate in the political process without fear of retribution, and that our votes will be counted -- at least most of the time.

--- Barack Obama. "The Audacity of Hope." Democratic National Convention. Boston. 27 July 2004.



Benjamin Franklin's Closing Speech at the Constitutional Convention

I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them: For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others. Most men indeed as well as most sects in Religion, think themselves in possession of all truth, and that wherever others differ from them it is so far error. Steele a Protestant in a Dedication tells the Pope, that the only difference between our Churches in their opinions of the certainty of their doctrines is, the Church of Rome is infallible and the Church of England is never in the wrong. But though many private persons think almost as highly of their own infallibility as of that of their sect, few express it so naturally as a certain French lady, who in a dispute with her sister, said "I don't know how it happens, Sister but I meet with no body but myself, that's always in the right—*Il n'y a que moi qui a toujours raison.*"

In these sentiments, Sir, I agree to this Constitution with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general Government necessary for us, and there is no form of Government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered, and believe farther that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in Despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic Government, being incapable of any other. I doubt too whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution. For when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does; and I think it will astonish our enemies, who are waiting with confidence to hear that our councils are confounded like those of the Builders of Babel; and that our States are on the point of separation, only to meet hereafter for the purpose of cutting one another's throats. Thus I consent, Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors, I sacrifice to the public good. I have never whispered a syllable of them abroad. Within these walls they were born, and here they shall die. If every one of us in returning to our Constituents were to report the objections he has had to it, and endeavor to gain partisans in support of them, we might prevent its being generally received, and thereby lose all the salutary effects & great advantages resulting naturally in our favor among foreign Nations as well as among ourselves, from our real or apparent unanimity. Much of the strength & efficiency of any Government in procuring and securing happiness to the people, depends, on opinion, on the general opinion of the goodness of the Government, as well as well as of the wisdom and integrity of its Governors. I hope therefore that for our own sakes as a part of the people, and for the sake of posterity, we shall act heartily and unanimously in recommending this Constitution (if approved by Congress & confirmed by the Conventions) wherever our influence may extend, and turn our future thoughts & endeavors to the means of having it well administered.

On the whole, Sir, I can not help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility, and to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.

--- Benjamin Franklin. Closing Speech of the Constitutional Convention. 17 September 1787.

Patrick Henry, "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death"

If we wish to be free -- if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending -- if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained, we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak -- unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance, by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot?

Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of the means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.

The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable -- and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, "Peace! Peace!" -- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

--- Patrick Henry. "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death." Virginia. 23 March 1775.

George W. Bush's Inaugural Address

America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests, and teach us what it means to be citizens.

--- George W. Bush. "Inaugural Address." Washington, D.C. 20 January 2001.

John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility -- I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it. And the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.



My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

--- John F. Kennedy. "Inaugural Address." Washington, D.C. 1961.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, "The Ship of State"

Thou, too, sail on, O Ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!
We know what Master laid thy keel,
What Workmen wrought thy ribs of steel,
Who made each mast, and sail, and rope,
What anvils rang, what hammers beat,
In what a forge and what a heat
Were shaped the anchors of thy hope!
Fear not each sudden sound and shock,
'Tis of the wave and not the rock;
'Tis but the flapping of the sail,
And not a rent made by the gale!
In spite of rock and tempest's roar,
In spite of false lights on the shore,

Sail on, nor fear to breast the sea!
Our hearts, our hopes, are all with thee.
Our hearts, our hopes, our prayers, our tears,
Our faith triumphant o'er our fears,
Are all with thee,—are all with thee!

--- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. "The Ship of State." 1849.

President Gerald R. Ford's Remarks on Taking the Oath of Office as President

Our Constitution works; our great Republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here the people rule. But there is a higher Power, by whatever name we honor Him, who ordains not only righteousness but love, not only justice but mercy.

--- Gerald Ford. Washington, D.C. 9 August 1974.

A Justice Oliver W. Holmes' Dissent

Persecution for the expression of opinions seems to me perfectly logical. If you have no doubt of your premises or your power and want a certain result with all your heart you naturally express your wishes in law and sweep away all opposition. To allow opposition by speech seems to indicate that you think the speech impotent, as when a man says that he has squared the circle, or that you do not care whole heartedly for the result, or that you doubt either your power or your premises. But when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas--that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That at any rate is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death, unless they so imminently threaten immediate interference with the lawful and pressing purposes of the law that an immediate check is required to save the country.

--- Justice Oliver W. Holmes. "Abrams v. US, 250 US 616." 10 November 1919.

President George W. Bush, Address on Terrorism

Americans are asking, "What is expected of us?" I ask you to live your lives and hug your children. I know many citizens have fears tonight and I ask you to be calm and resolute, even in the face of a continuing threat. I ask you to uphold the values of America and remember why so many have come here. We're in a fight for our principles and our first responsibility is to live by them. No one should be singled out for unfair treatment or unkind words because of their ethnic background or religious faith.

--- President George W. Bush. U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C. 20 September 2001.

President George Washington's Farewell Address

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels, and joint efforts of common dangers, sufferings, and successes.

--- President George Washington. "Farewell Address." *American Daily Advertiser*. Pg 2. 19 September 1796.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Special Message to the Congress, "The American Dream"

Our mission is at once the oldest and the most basic of this country: to right wrong, to do justice, to serve man. In our time we have come to live with moments of great crisis. Our lives have been marked with debate about great issues; issues of war and peace, issues of prosperity and depression. But rarely in any time does an issue lay bare the secret heart of America itself. Rarely are we met with a challenge, not to our growth or abundance, our welfare or our security, but rather to the values and the purposes and the meaning of our beloved Nation.

--- President Lyndon Baines Johnson. "Special Message to the Congress: The American Dream." U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C. 15 March 1965.

Alexander Hamilton: Inviolable Respect for the Constitution

If it be asked, 'What is the most sacred duty and the greatest source of our security in a Republic?' The answer would be, An inviolable respect for the Constitution and Laws — the first growing out of the last.... A sacred respect for the constitutional law is the vital principle, the sustaining energy of a free government.

--Alexander Hamilton, Essay in the *American Daily Advertiser*, Aug 28, 1794

Men and Angels by James Madison

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.

--James Madison, *Federalist No. 51*, February 8, 1788

Protecting Freedom by Clarence Darrow

You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free.

--Clarence Darrow, 1920

E. B. White, “Freedom”

I believe in freedom with the same burning delight, the same faith, the same intense abandon which attended its birth on this continent more than a century and a half ago. I am writing my declaration rapidly, much as though I were shaving to catch a train. Events abroad give a man a feeling of being pressed for time. Actually I do not believe I am pressed for time, and I apologize to the reader for a false impression that may be created. I just want to tell, before I get slowed down, that I am in love with freedom and that it is an affair of long standing and that it is a fine state to be in, and that I am deeply suspicious of people who are beginning to adjust to fascism and dictators merely because they are succeeding in war. From such adaptable natures a smell rises. I pinch my nose.

For as long as I can remember I have had a sense of living somewhat freely in a natural world. I don't mean I enjoyed freedom of action, but my existence seemed to have the quality of freedom. I traveled with secret papers pertaining to a divine conspiracy. Intuitively I've always been aware of the vitally important pact which a man has with himself, to be all things to himself, and to be identified with all things, to stand self-reliant, taking advantage of his haphazard connection with a planet, riding his luck, and following his bent with the tenacity of a hound. My first and greatest love affair was with this thing we call freedom, this lady of infinite allure, this dangerous and beautiful and sublime being who restores and supplies us all.

--- E.B. White. “Freedom.” *Harper's Magazine*. July 1940.

H.L. Mencken, “On Being an American”

The United States, to my eye, is incomparably the greatest show on earth. It is a show which avoids diligently all the kinds of clowning which tire me most quickly - for example, royal ceremonials, the tedious hocus-pocus of haut politique, the taking of politics seriously - and lays chief stress upon the kinds which delight me unceasingly - for example, the ribald combats of demagogues, the exquisitely ingenious operations of master rogues, the pursuit of witches and heretics, the desperate struggles of inferior men to claw their way into Heaven. We have clowns in constant practice among us who are as far above the clowns of any other great state as a Jack Dempsey is above a paralytic - and not a few dozen or score of them, but whole droves and herds. Human enterprises which, in all other Christian countries, are resigned despairingly to an incurable dullness - things that seem devoid of exhilarating amusement, by their very nature - are here lifted to such vast heights of buffoonery that contemplating them strains the midriff almost to breaking.

--- H.L. Mencken. “On Being an American.” *Prejudices, Third Series*. 1922.

Jeanette Rankin's Speech in Congress on Women's Rights and Wartime Service

Deep down in the hearts of the American people is a living faith in democracy. Sometimes it is not expressed in the most effective way. Sometimes it seems almost forgotten. But when the test comes, we find it still there, groping and aspiring and helping men and women to understand each other and their common need. It is our national religion and it prompts in us

the desire for that measure of justice based which is based on equal opportunity, equal protection, equal freedom for all.

--- Jeanette Rankin. "Women's Rights and Wartime Service." U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C. 10 January 1918.

Robert F. Kennedy, "Day of Affirmation" Address at Cape Town University

We stand here in the name of freedom. At the heart of that Western freedom and democracy is the belief that the individual man, the child of God, is the touchstone of value, and all society, groups, the state, exist for his benefit. Therefore the enlargement of liberty for individual human beings must be the supreme goal and the abiding practice of any Western society.

The first element of this individual liberty is the freedom of speech: the right to express and communicate ideas, to set oneself apart from the dumb beasts of field and forest; to recall governments to their duties and obligations; above all, the right to affirm one's membership and allegiance to the body politic-to society-to the men with whom we share our land, our heritage, and our children's future.

Hand in hand with freedom of speech goes the power to be heard, to share in the decisions of government which shape men's lives. Everything that makes man's life worthwhile-family, work, education, a place to rear one's children and a place to rest one's head -all this depends on decisions of government; all can be swept away by a government which does not heed the demands of its people. Therefore, the essential humanity of men can be protected and preserved only where government must answer-not just to the wealthy, not just to those of a particular religion, or a particular race, but to all its people.

And even government by the consent of the governed, as in our own Constitution, must be limited in its power to act against its people; so that there may be no interference with the right to worship, or with the security of the home; no arbitrary imposition of pains or penalties by officials high or low; no restrictions on the freedom of men to seek education or work or opportunity of any kind, so that each man may become all he is capable of becoming.

--- Robert F. Kennedy. "Day of Affirmation." Cape Town University. South Africa. 6 June 1966.

President Woodrow Wilson, "War Message to the Congress"

[This] right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts,—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.

--- President Woodrow Wilson. "War Message to the Congress." U.S. Congress. Washington, D.C. 2 April 1917.

Dwight D. Eisenhower's Farewell Address

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system – ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

Another factor in maintaining balance involves the element of time. As we peer into society's future, we – you and I, and our government – must avoid the impulse to live only for today, plundering for, for our own ease and convenience, the precious resources of tomorrow. We cannot mortgage the material assets of our grandchildren without asking the loss also of their political and spiritual heritage. We want democracy to survive for all generations to come, not to become the insolvent phantom of tomorrow.

Down the long lane of the history yet to be written America knows that this world of ours, ever growing smaller, must avoid becoming a community of dreadful fear and hate, and be, instead, a proud confederation of mutual trust and respect.

Such a confederation must be one of equals. The weakest must come to the conference table with the same confidence as do we, protected as we are by our moral, economic, and military strength. That table, though scarred by many past frustrations, cannot be abandoned for the certain agony of the battlefield.

--- Dwight D. Eisenhower. "Farewell Address." Washington, D.C. 17 January 2000

President Bill Clinton Speech at Michigan State University

As long as human beings make up our government there will be mistakes. But our Constitution was established by Americans determined to limit those abuses. And think of the limits—the Bill of Rights, the separation of powers, access to the courts, the right to take your case to the country through the media, and the right to vote people in or out of office on a regular basis.

--- William Jefferson Clinton. Michigan State University. 5 May 1995.