



CONSTITUTION DAY

September 17 is Constitution Day. This day commemorates the September 17, 1787 signing of the United States Constitution. Written in 1787, ratified in 1788, and in operation since 1789, the United States Constitution is the world's longest surviving written charter of government. Its first three words—"We the People"—affirm that the government of the United States exists to serve its citizens. For over two centuries the Constitution has remained in force because its framers wisely separated and balanced governmental powers to safeguard the interests of majority rule and minority rights, of liberty and equality, and of the federal and state governments. Since 1789, the Constitution has evolved through amendments to meet the changing needs of a nation now profoundly different from the eighteenth-century world in which its creators lived.

To encourage all Americans to learn more about the Constitution, Congress in 1956 established Constitution Week, to begin each year on September 17th, the date in 1787 when delegates to the Convention signed the Constitution. In 2004, Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia included key provisions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2005 designating September 17th of each year as Constitution Day and requiring public schools and governmental offices to provide educational programs to promote a better understanding of the Constitution.

Some informational resources pertaining to the Constitution are listed below.

- The National Archives website provides Constitution Day activities and materials. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/> and <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-workshop/>
- The Library of Congress American Memory site provides numerous resources on the Constitution. These two links provide access: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html> and <http://thomas.loc.gov/teachers/constitution.html>
- The National Endowment for the Humanities provides content on the Constitution through the EDSITEMENT website: <http://edsitement.neh.gov/constitution-day>
- The U. S. Senate has posted material from the Legislative Branch: <http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/ConstitutionDay>

Webb Institute observes Constitution Day each year with a copy of the Constitution that is presented in the main hallway of Stevenson Taylor Hall.