

## September 17 Declared Constitution Day

President George W. Bush signed a bill (**public law 108-447**) which designates every September 17th as Constitution Day. The University of West Florida proudly celebrates Constitution Day in September with a variety of activities.

### Information about the Constitution

More information about the U.S. Constitution and Constitution Day is available on the websites listed below.

[http://www.house.gov/Constitution/  
Constitution.html](http://www.house.gov/Constitution/Constitution.html)

[http://www.archives.gov/digital\\_classroom/  
lessons/constitution\\_day/  
constitution\\_day.html](http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/constitution_day/constitution_day.html)

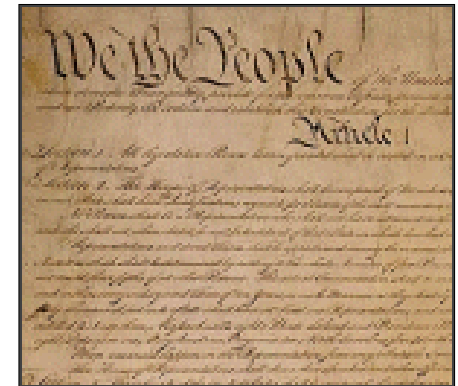
[http://www.why.org/tv12/presidents/  
edresources.html](http://www.why.org/tv12/presidents/edresources.html)

[http://www.archives.gov/  
national\\_archives\\_experience/charters/  
constitution.html](http://www.archives.gov/national_archives_experience/charters/constitution.html)

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## Constitution Day September 17

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

# Constitution Day



## Constitutional Convention

According to the government archives, the Federal Convention convened in the State House (Independence Hall) in Philadelphia on May 14, 1787, to revise the Articles of Confederation. Because the delegations from only two states were at first present, the members adjourned from day to day until a quorum of seven states was obtained on May 25. Through discussion and debate it became clear by mid-June that, rather than amend the existing Articles, the Convention would draft an entirely new frame of government. For weeks the delegates debated in closed sessions and redrafted the articles of the new Constitution. Among the chief points at issue were how much power to allow the central government, how many representatives in Congress to allow each state, and how these representatives should be elected—directly by the people or by the state legislators. The Constitution was signed by 39 of the 55 Founding Fathers on September 17th, 1787.

## The Constitution

The Constitution is the document that governs our nation. The Constitution includes the Preamble, 7 Articles, and 27 Amendments.

**Article I (1) The Legislative Branch** - creates the Congress to make laws, divides Congress into a Senate and House of Representatives, makes rules for election of members, gives some powers to Congress, limits other powers

**Article II (2) The Executive Branch** - sets up the presidency and vice presidency to carry out or execute the laws, election rules, powers of the president, how to impeach

**Article III (3) The Judicial Branch** - sets up the Supreme Court, duties and powers of Supreme Court and federal courts, power of judicial review, defines treason

**Article IV (4) The States** - creates rules for states to get along with other states, guarantees to states, admitting states to the Union

**Article V (5) Making Amendments** - how to add amendments to the Constitution

**Article VI (6) Supreme Law of the Land** - the Constitution is the highest law of the land

**Article VII (7) Ratification** - the Constitution became effective when 9 out of 13 states approved it

**Amendments** – During the debates on the adoption of the Constitution, opponents charged that the Constitution as drafted would open the way to tyranny by the new government. They insisted on a "bill of rights" that would spell out the immunities of individual citizens. On December 15, 1791, the first 10 Constitutional Amendments became the **Bill of Rights** that defines citizens' rights in relation to the newly established government under the Constitution.

- I. Freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition
- II. Right to bear arms
- III. Quartering of troops
- IV. Right to be secure against unlawful search and seizure
- V. Due process, double jeopardy, self-incrimination
- VI. Right to jury trial, right to counsel
- VII. Right to common law suits
- VIII. Protection against excess bail or fines, cruel and unusual punishment
- IX. Rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage
- X. Powers reserved to states and citizens

