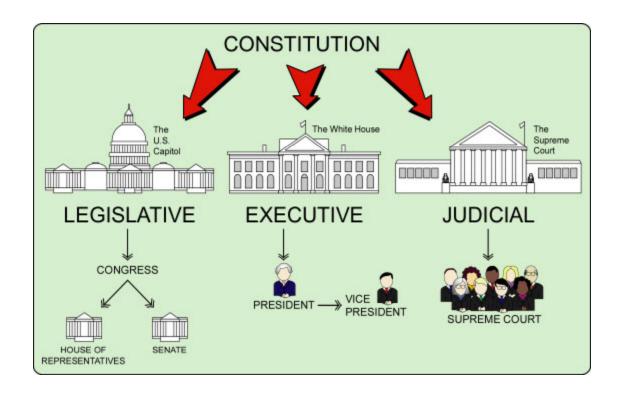
What is the Constitution?

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The document that set up the government under which laws (rules) are made and enforced in the United States.



Do you ever think about the Constitution as you go about your daily life, or as you plan for your future?

If not, maybe you should. Virtually every aspect of your life is touched by constitutional government in action.

 Your school is here because it was built, paid for and is operated by government employees. You are in school because many generations of elected officials and voters determined that you and they would be better off if you had educational opportunities. Do you know of any proof of the benefits for young people from those decisions?

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Full Time Workers in the U.S. age 25 and older, 2007

Number of workers:

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Highest Education Attained		Median Income	Difference from previous step		% of Professiona
less than 9th grade	2.96%	\$21,694			21.69%
Grades 9-12, no diploma	5.08%	25,802	\$4,108	\$4,108	25.80%
High School graduate	28.57%	32,464	6,662	9,089	32.46%
Some college, no degree	17.72%	38,728	6,264	15,353	38.73%
Associate degree (AA)	10.10%	41,837	3,109	18,462	41.84%
Bachelor's degree (BA)	22.81%	53,141	11,304	29,766	53.14%
Master's degree (MA)	9.16%	62,920	9,779	39,545	62.92%
Doctorate (Ph.D.)	1.60%	85,837	22,917	62,462	85.84%
Professional degree (Dr., lawyer, dentist, etc.)	1.99%	100,000	14,163	76,625	100.00%

Average annual expenditures per household (2006): \$48,398

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- Most of the food you eat, the fluids you drink, and the medicines you take are inspected by government agents, and are approved for sale only when shown to be safe. The federal Food and Drug Administration was created by an act of Congress in 1906 (104 years ago). What have been the effects of that decision?

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Expectation of Life (in years) at birth, U.S.

	1900	47.3
	1910	50.0
	1920	54.1
	1930	59.7
	1940	62.9
	1950	68.2
	1960	69.7
	1970	70.9
	1980	73.7
	1990	75.4
	2000	77.0
	2004	77.8
2010 (projec	78.5	
2015 (projec	79.2	

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- Most of the food you eat, the fluids you drink, and the medicines you take are inspected by government agents, and are approved for sale only when shown to be safe.
- The streets on which you travel were built and paid for, and are maintained by people working for constitutionally elected officials. Suppose roads were privately owned, and you had to stop every mile or two to pay a toll to a different owner in order to use that stretch of roadway? Or, what if police and fire services were all private, and would only appear when you needed them if you could pay what they asked? Suppose your neighbor's house was burning and s/he couldn't afford to pay for fire protection?

Government has the power to make life and death decisions



Washington Post, April 29, 2005

• In 2002, the United States government took us to war in Afghanistan. In 2003, it took us to war in Iraq. To date, 4,420 U.S. soldiers have returned from Iraq in flag draped coffins on flights like the one pictured above; while 1,278 have come back that way from Afghanistan.

Government has the power to make life and death decisions



• Those decisions effect others besides U.S. citizens.

Government has the power to make life and death decisions



New York Times, September 11, 2007

Those decisions effect other species too.

Government has the power to make life changing decisions



Photo by Nina Berman

• Ty Zeigel and Renee Kline prior to Ty's deployment to Iraq in 2003.

Government has the power to make life changing decisions



Photos by Nina Berman



 Marine Sgt. Ty Zeigel and Renee Kline on their wedding day in late 2006.

In 2004, Ty's tour was cut short when a suicide bomber blew up near his truck during a routine patrol. The searing heat melted most of the skin off his body and left him blind in one eye. His skull was so badly shattered that doctors had to replace it with plastic. Ty was taken to Brooke Army Medical Center, where he underwent 19 surgeries.

What can you do about any of this?

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- If citizens do not understand how the government is supposed to work, or do not care enough to stay informed, discuss issues facing the community, vote thoughtfully and keep an eye on what their representatives are doing; then the government designed by the framers will not function in the interests of the citizens.

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- After the Constitution was finished, and as he was leaving Independence Hall, Benjamin Franklin is reported to have been asked, "Well, Doctor, what have we got—a Republic or a Monarchy?" His reply, "A Republic, if you can keep it."

Happy Constitution Day! What will you do to keep it?

of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquisity, provide for the common Defence, 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.

SECTION 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

SECTION 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty-five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

[Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons.] The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies. The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

SECTION 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one-third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which be shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.