



# **Welcome to the National Archives Know Your Records program!**

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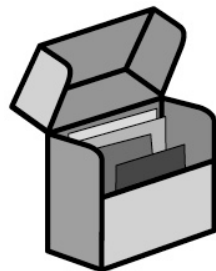
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**KNOW YOUR RECORDS**  
National Archives and Records Administration

# About the National Archives

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is the nation's record keeper. Of all the documents and materials created in the course of business conducted by the United States Federal government, only 1%–3% are determined permanently valuable. Those valuable records are preserved and are available to you, whether you want to see if they contain clues about your family's history, need to prove a veteran's military service, or are researching an historical topic that interests you.



# KNOW YOUR RECORDS

National Archives and Records Administration



KNOW YOUR RECORDS  
National Archives and Records Administration

The Know Your Records program consists of free events with up-to-date information about our holdings. Events offer opportunities for you to learn about the National Archives' records through ongoing lectures, monthly genealogy programs, and the annual genealogy fair. Additional resources include an online reference reports for genealogical research, and the newsletter *Researcher News*.



June 2, 2016



KNOW YOUR RECORDS  
National Archives and Records Administration

# ***U.S. Constitutional Amendments***

## **Christine Blackerby**

Co-curator Christine Blackerby discusses the records used in our new exhibit, “Amending America” celebrating the 225th anniversary of the ratification of the Bill of Rights.



# Presenter's Biography



**Christine  
Blackerby**  
Co-curator

Christine Blackerby is an Education and Public Outreach Specialist at the Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C. She does public and educational outreach programs to highlight the history of Congress. Christine received her B.A. in history and political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and her M.A. in education at the University of Kentucky.

# *Amending America*

A new National Archives exhibit

Christine Blackerby  
Jennifer N. Johnson





# Introduction

## 11,000 Attempts

More than 11,000 times, members of Congress have proposed new constitutional amendments.

## 27 Passed

Only 27 times have there been enough support for an amendment to be ratified. This includes the ten amendments that are called the Bill of Rights.

## 6 Failed

Six times, Congress passed an amendment but the states failed to ratify. These amendments came closest to success, but didn't make it into the Constitution.

ully hard to make a constitution-  
ment. Each one



# How to Create a More Perfect Union

Article V of the Constitution describes how amendments are made



"I do not conceive that we are more inspired—have more wisdom—or possess more virtue than those who will come after us. The power under the Constitution will always be with the people."

George Washington, 1787



Article V



# LAWRENCE F. O'BRIEN GALLERY

On Exhibit  
through  
September 4, 2017

## Amending AMERICA

11,000 Attempts, but Only 27 Amendments

Presented in part by:



HISTORY®



Lawrence F. O'Brien Family

Bill of Rights

Freedom of Speech



# #AmendmentFail

## Proposing an amendment to the Constitution

to change name of this Republic from the  
United States of America to the United States  
of the World

# 1893



#AmendingAmerica



# Our Rights



#AmendingAmerica

More than anything else, the history of constitutional amendments is a history of expanding rights and democracy. Seventeen of the 27 ratified amendments secure or expand individual rights. Some proposed amendments would limit or remove individual rights, but none of these have ultimately been successful.

## By the Numbers

amendments sent by  
the First Congress to  
states for ratification  
in 1789

12

17

ratified amendments that  
are related to rights

10

number of those  
amendments that  
were ratified, and  
became known as  
the Bill of Rights

6340

number of members of the House of  
Representatives if the first amendment proposed by  
the First Congress had passed (today we have 435)

28

number of rights listed  
within the Bill of Rights  
amendments



# Bill of Rights













# Senate Mark Up of the Bill of Rights

September 9,  
1789

Records of the  
U.S. Senate

## CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

In the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Monday, 24th August, 1789.

RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, two thirds of both Houses ~~do hereby~~ That the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the said Constitution—Viz.

ARTICLES in addition to, and amendment of, the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

### ARTICLE THE FIRST.

After the first enumeration, required by the first Article of the Constitution, there shall be one Representative for every thirty thousand, until the number shall amount to one hundred, after which the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall be not less than one hundred Representatives, nor less than one Representative for every forty thousand persons, until the number of Representatives shall amount to two hundred, after which the proportion shall be so regulated by Congress, that there shall not be less than two hundred Representatives, nor less than one Representative for every fifty thousand persons.

### ARTICLE THE SECOND.

No law varying the compensation to the members of Congress, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

### ARTICLE THE THIRD.

Congress shall make no law establishing ~~religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof~~, nor shall they ~~grant any title of nobility~~.

*Articles of Faith or a mode of Worship, or prohibiting the free exercise of Religion.*

*Congress shall make no law abridging*

### ARTICLE THE FOURTH.

The Freedom of Speech, ~~and of the Press~~, and the right of the People peaceably to assemble, and to ~~present~~ petitions to the Government for a redress of grievances, shall not be infringed.

*petition*

[ 2 ]

### ARTICLE THE FIFTH.

well regulated militia, composed of the body of the People, the best security of a free State; the right of the People to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed; but no one religiously scrupulous of bearing arms, shall be compelled to render military service in person.

### ARTICLE THE SIXTH.

Soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner prescribed by law.

### ARTICLE THE SEVENTH.

The right of the People to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

### ARTICLE THE EIGHTH.

*is to be twice drawn in honor of death, by any*  
No person shall be subject, except in case of impeachment, to more than one trial or punishment for the same offense, nor shall be compelled in any criminal case, to be a witness against himself; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

### ARTICLE THE NINTH.

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, to be informed of the nature and cause of accusation, to be confronted with the witnesses against him, to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defence.

### ARTICLE THE TENTH.

No trial of all crimes (except in cases of impeachment, and in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger) shall be by an impartial jury of the Vicinage, with the requisite of unanimity for conviction, the right of challenge, and other accustomed requisites; nor shall any person be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment by a Grand Jury; but this shall not extend to cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger, in which the indictment may by law be authorized in some other manner.

3 ]

10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in incorporated.

### THE ELEVENTH.

The Court of the United States, shall have no power to hear and determine any case arising between two or more States, or between a State and one or more Citizens of another State, or between Citizens of different States, who shall sue in any Court of the United States, shall have no power to hear and determine any case arising between two or more States, or between a State and one or more Citizens of another State, or between Citizens of different States, who shall sue in any Court of the United States.

### THE TWELFTH.

*shall count twenty dollars*  
The right of trial by Jury shall be preserved.

### THE THIRTEENTH.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

### THE FOURTEENTH.

The right of trial by Jury in criminal cases, shall not be infringed; nor the freedom of speech, or of the press, shall be infringed.

### THE FIFTEENTH.

The Constitution of certain rights, shall not be infringed; nor shall others retained by the people.

### THE SIXTEENTH.

The Constitution to the government of the United States, shall not be infringed; nor shall others retained by the people.

### THE SEVENTEENTH.

*U.S.*  
No law shall be passed by the Constitution, nor prohibited by the States respectively, or to the People.

HENRY BECKLEY, CLERK.

In SENATE, August 25, 1789.  
printed for the consideration of the

SAMUEL A. OTIS, SECRETARY.



Virginia.

General Assembly begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Richmond on Monday the seventeenth day of October in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and ninety one.

25<sup>th</sup> of October 1791

Resolved that the first Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

November 5<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the second Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the third Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the fourth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the fifth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the sixth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the seventh Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the eighth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the ninth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the tenth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the eleventh Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

Monday the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1791.

Resolved that the twelfth Article of the Amendments proposed by Congress to the Constitution of the United States be ratified by this Commonwealth.

December 15<sup>th</sup> 1791.

Agreed to by the Senate.

62<sup>5</sup> 52

John Paine S.  
Theophilus S.A.D.

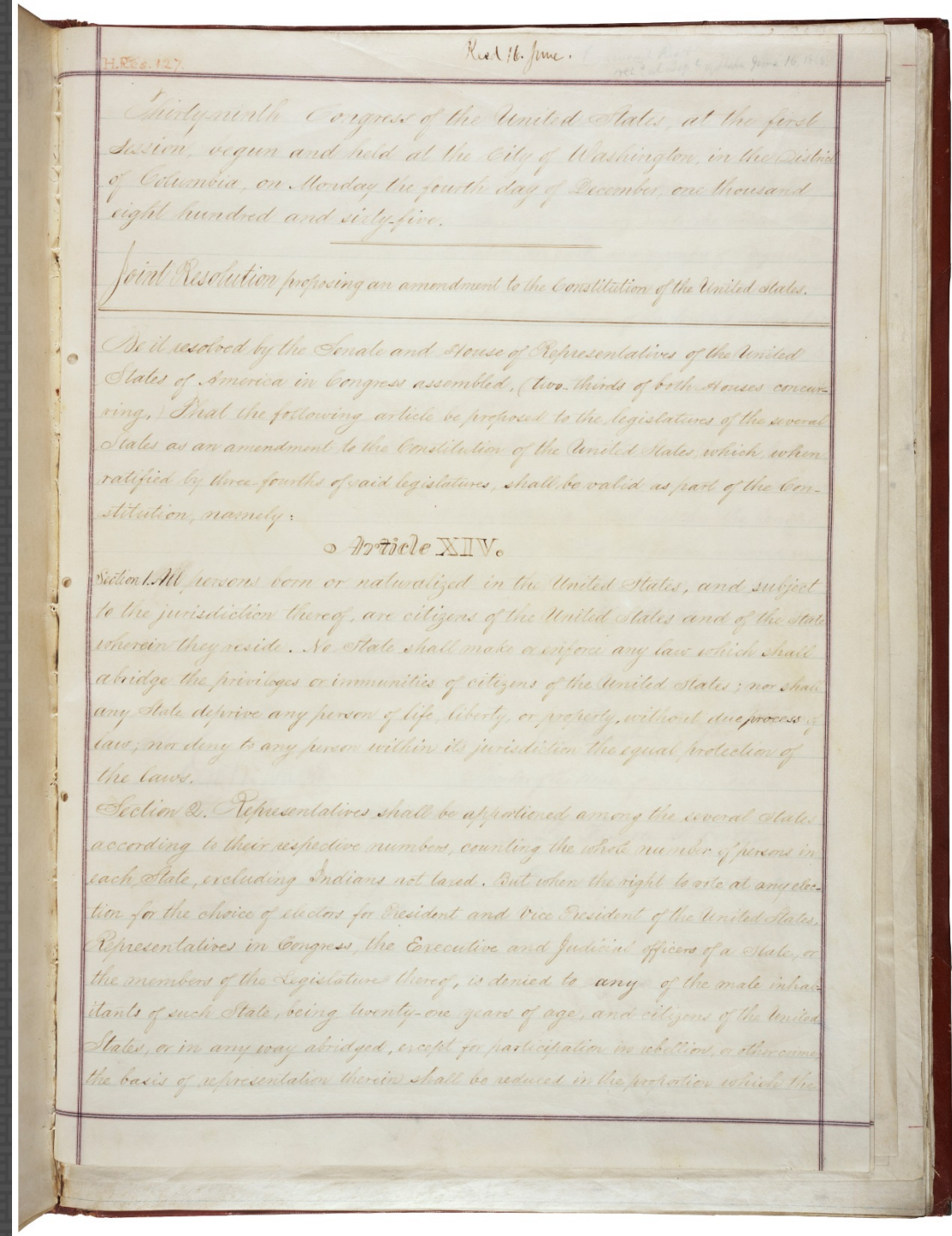
Virginia's ratification  
of the Bill of Rights  
December 15, 1791

General Records of  
the U.S. Government



Joint Resolution  
Proposing the  
Fourteenth  
Amendment to the  
United States  
Constitution, proposed  
June 13, 1866

*General Records of the  
U.S. Government*



A stylized graphic of a scale of justice, rendered in a light blue color. It features a flat base, a vertical pillar, and a horizontal beam with a curved, bowl-like shape at the end, representing the pans of the scale.

**Protects the rights  
to free speech,  
press, assembly,  
petition, and  
religion**

**st**



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*Alabama Baptist State Convention*

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CLAYTON GILBERT  
ASSOCIATE

May 8, 1964

Honorable Emanuel Celler  
House of Representatives  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Representative Celler:

For some time I have been watching with interest the controversy on "prayer and Bible reading in school." When the Supreme Court ruled that forced and designated prayers or Bible reading were unconstitutional, I said, "Amen." For, this is as it should be.

Then all "hell broke loose." Everybody wanted to impeach the Supreme Court and change the constitution so we could get God and the Bible back into our schools. They didn't stop to realize that neither had left. The Supreme Court did not rule that Bible reading and prayer in our schools were unconstitutional. It is unconstitutional only when forced or designated.

I personally felt that the news media would inform the people and sanity would prevail, but this does not seem the case. The panic button has been pushed and everyone is running in all directions trying to return something that hasn't been lost. In their effort to rectify what they

Letter from the Alabama Baptist  
State Convention opposed to a  
school prayer constitutional  
amendment, May 8, 1964

*Records of the U.S. House of  
Representatives*

May I urge that you do everything within your power to oppose the enactment of the Becker Amendment or any similar amendment. Leave the First Amendment as it is. It gives me the freedom to worship as I desire and the freedom to petition the government for a redress of grievances. This I am doing.

with the Whole World



Panic, No. 1  
March 1954

*Records of the U.S. Senate*





Letter to the House UnAmerican Activities  
Committee (HUAC) from Lillian Hellman  
regarding her subpoena, May 19, 1952

*Records of the U.S. House of Representatives*

c/o Rauh and Levy  
1631 K Street, N.W.  
Washington 6, D. C.

May 19, 1952

Honorable John S. Wood  
Chairman  
House Committee on  
Un-American Activities  
Room 226 Old House Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wood:

As you know, I am under subpoena to appear before  
your Committee on May 21, 1952.

I am most willing to answer all questions about  
myself. I have nothing to hide from your Committee and  
there is nothing in my life of which I am ashamed. I have

Honorable John S. Wood -

2

- May 19, 1952

I can be cited for contempt. My counsel tells me that if I answer questions about myself, I will have waived my rights under the Fifth Amendment and could be forced legally to answer questions about others. This is very difficult for a layman to understand. But there is one principle that I do understand: I am not willing, now or in the future, to bring bad trouble to people who, in my past association with them, were completely innocent of any talk or any action that was disloyal or subversive. I do not like subversion or disloyalty

Lillian Hellman

15<sup>th</sup> Provides  
for the right  
to vote  
regardless  
of race

19<sup>th</sup> Provides  
for the right  
to vote  
regardless of  
gender

Prohibits  
poll taxes

24<sup>th</sup>

23<sup>rd</sup> Gives the  
residents of  
the District of  
Columbia the  
right to vote  
for president

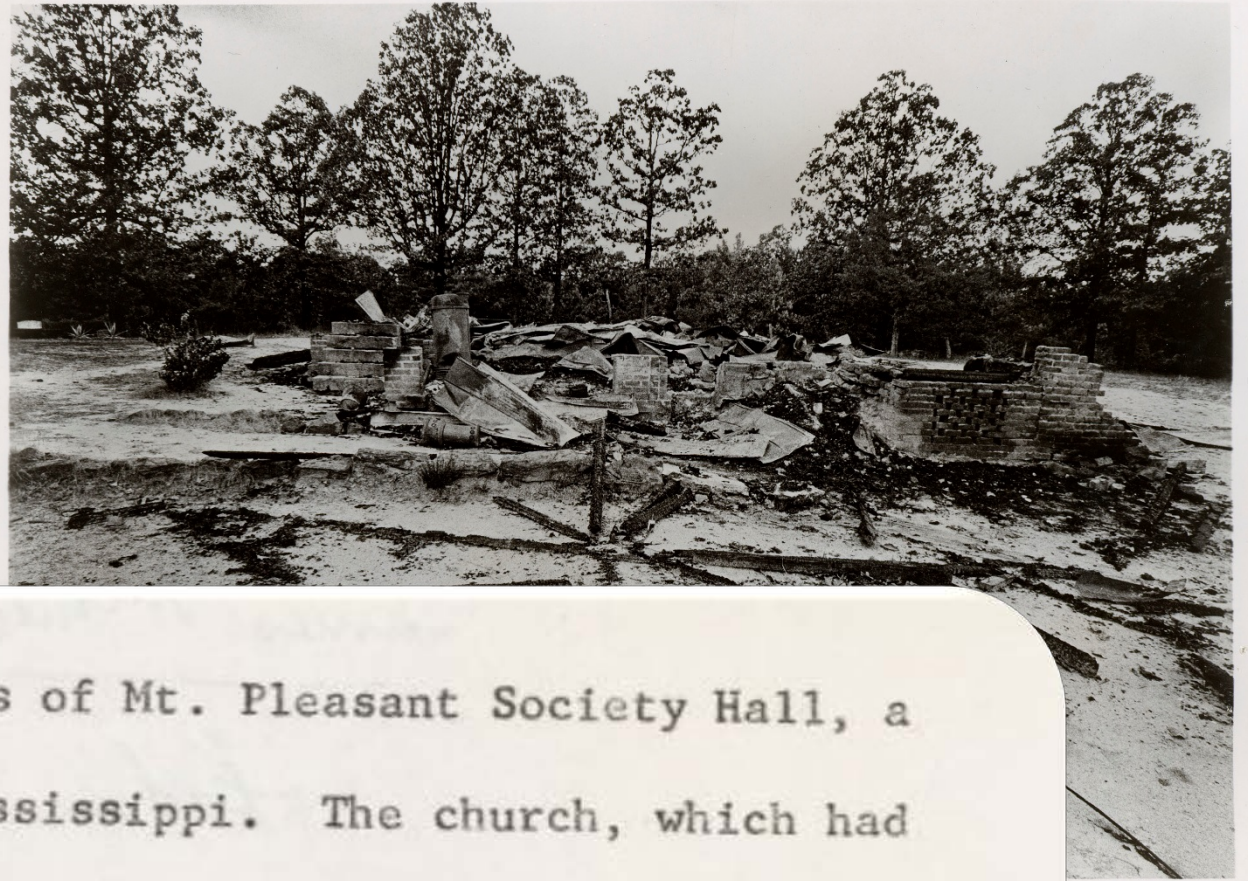
Provides for  
the right to  
vote to  
citizens age  
18 or older

26<sup>th</sup>



Photograph of the ruins of the Mt.  
Pleasant Society Hall in  
Gluckstadt, Mississippi, destroyed  
by fire on August 11, 1964

*Records of the U.S. House of  
Representatives*



This is a photograph of the ruins of Mt. Pleasant Society Hall, a Baptist church in Gluckstadt, Mississippi. The church, which had housed a CORE Voter School, was destroyed by fire on August 11, 1964. The Hall was still smoldering as this photograph was taken, since the fire department never came. Gluckstadt is near Canton, in ~~Meridian~~ <sup>Madison</sup> County, Mississippi.



In the House of Representa-  
tives of the United States.  
Joint Resolution

Proposing an amendment  
to the Constitution of the United  
States, extending the right of suf-  
frage to widows and spinsters  
who are property holders.

Resolved by the Senate and  
House of Representatives of the Uni-  
ted States of America in Congress  
assembled (two thirds of each House  
concurring therein). That the following  
article be proposed to the legislatures of  
the several States as an amendment  
to the Constitution of the United States;  
which, when ratified by three fourths  
of the legislatures of said States, shall be  
valid ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> a part of the Consti-  
tution of the United States, viz;

Article 16

Section 1. That the right of any widow  
or spinster, who is a property holder, and  
a citizen of the United States, to vote and  
to hold office, shall not be denied or  
abridged by the United States or by any State  
Section 2. That Congress shall have  
power by appropriate legislation, to en-  
force the provisions of this article.

H.J. Res. 159 proposing an amendment to the  
Constitution to extend the right to vote to  
widows and spinsters who are property  
holders, endorsed April 30, 1888

Records of the U.S. House of Representatives

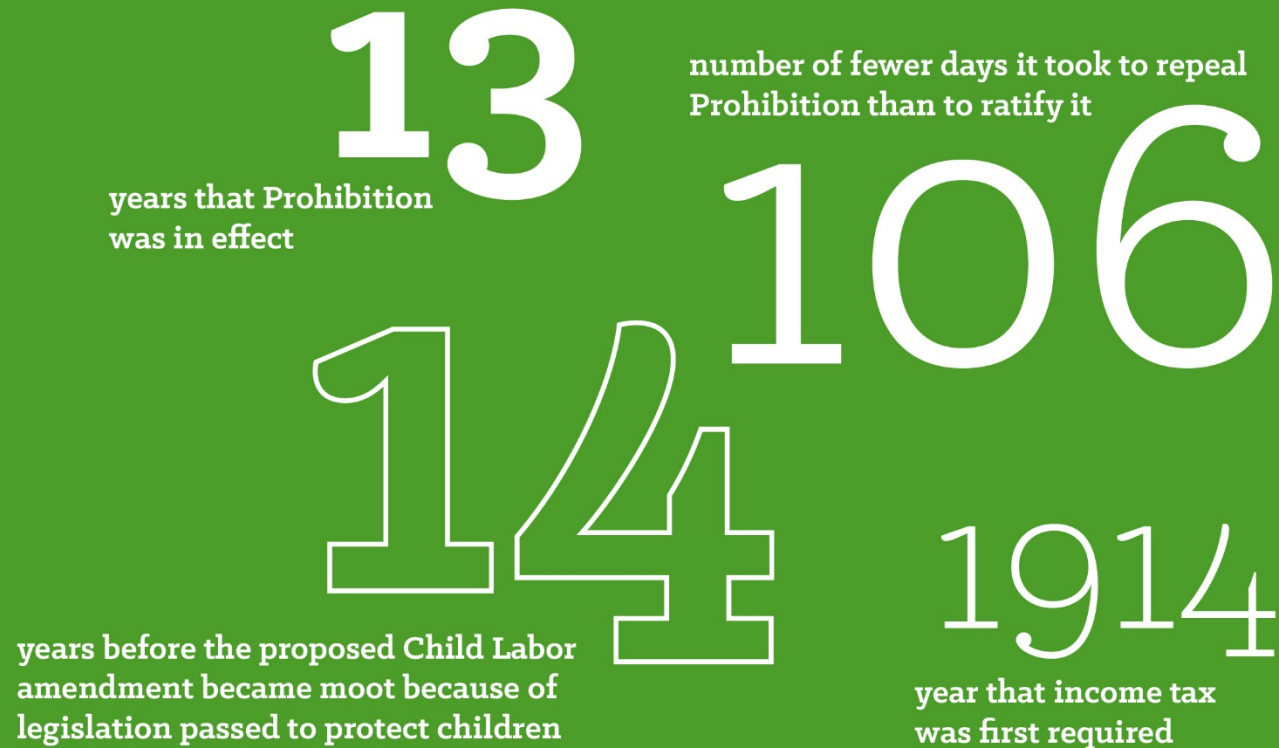
Article 16

Section 1. That the right of any widow  
or spinster, who is a property holder, and  
a citizen of the United States, to vote and  
to hold office, shall not be denied or  
abridged by the United States or by any State

# Refining Powers

The Constitution authorizes many powers for the Federal Government, but Americans have continued to try to add to or subtract from that list. Frequently, the powers in proposed amendments to the Constitution are responses to specific events at certain points in time. They fail because they don't achieve a sustained consensus over time.

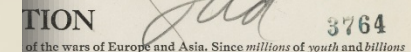
## By the Numbers





## 3764

eting this campaign against our nation's ever again being drawn into another  
a war.)



JOINT RESOLUTION No. 199  
INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS ON  
FEBRUARY 5, 1937.  
BY REPRESENTATIVE  
LOUIS LUDLOW OF INDIANA

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), that the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as a part of the Constitution when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

"Except in the event of an invasion of the United States or its territorial possessions and attack upon its citizens residing therein, the authority of Congress to declare war shall not become effective until confirmed by a majority of all votes cast thereon in a nationwide referendum. Congress, when it deems a national crisis to exist, may by concurrent resolution refer the question of war or peace to the citizens of the States, the question to be voted on being, 'Shall the United States declare war on—?' Congress may otherwise by law provide for the enforcement of this section."

WE PETITION CONGRESS  
TO GIVE THE PEOPLE THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE  
ON WHETHER OR NOT WE  
ARE TO BE PLUNGED INTO  
ANOTHER FOREIGN WAR:

JOINT RESOLUTION No. 199  
INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS ON  
FEBRUARY 5, 1937.  
BY REPRESENTATIVE  
LOUIS LUDLOW OF INDIANA

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), that the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as a part of the Constitution when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths

"Except in the event of an invasion of the United States or its territorial possessions and attack upon its citizens residing therein, the authority of Congress to declare war shall not become effective until confirmed by a majority of all votes cast thereon in a nationwide referendum. Congress, when it deems a national crisis to exist, may by concurrent resolution refer the question of war to the citizens of the States, the question to be voted on being, 'Shall the United States declare war on—?' Congress may otherwise by law provide for the enforcement of this section."

ADDRESS	STATE
---------	-------

winter	Chico
village	Chico.
then	W. B. S.
said	Chico
will	Chico
the	Chico
village	Chico
the	Chico
the	Chico
will	Chico
will	Chico
the	Chico
the	Chico

ville	of
ille	the
the	the
ille	the
ille	the
fe	the
the	the

le	Ohio
le	Ohio
le	Ohio
le	Ohio
le	Ohio

aville	Ohio
enville	Ohio
enville	Ohio

mult	Ohio
mult	China

with	Ohio	✓
------	------	---

aville	Ohio	17
aville	Ohio	

Petition sent in by Rev. Chas E. Zumbel

Address Wauville, Okla  
Organization Church of the Brethren  
Amount remitted \$1.15 Chk.

38 names

Petition for a constitutional amendment to hold national referendums on declarations of war, circa 1938

*Records of the U.S. House of Representatives*

Return this petition with signatures to the  
RURAL LIFE COUNCIL, Department of the  
National Council for Prevention of War  
532 17th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.  
Additional copies sent upon request.

Petition sent in by Rev. Chas E. Zunkel  
Address Nauvillo Ohio  
Organization Church of the Brethren  
Amount remitted \$1.50

38 names

75TH CONGRESS  
3D SESSIONH. J. RES  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
AprilMR. SMITH of Oklahoma introduced  
was referred to the Com  
ordered

JOINT

Proposing an amendment to the Co

1 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE A  
2 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
3 THIRDS OF EACH HOUSE CONCURRI  
4 article is proposed as an ame  
5 United States, which shall be  
6 as a part of the Constitution  
7 of three-fourths of the sever  
8 "ART  
9 "SECTION 1. Drunkenness  
10 Territories thereof is hereby  
11 "SEC. 2. Congress and t  
12 current power to enforce the  
13 fix penalties for violation t

Why m

Section 3. That f  
known as Satur  
stricken from  
United States,

Section 4. Congre  
shall have concurrent power to change  
human nature from time to time in  
its or their discretion

Why not add:

Section 3. That period of time, commonly  
known as Saturday night, is hereby  
stricken from the calendars of the  
United States, and abolished.

Section 4. Congress and the several States  
shall have concurrent power to change  
human nature from time to time in  
its or their discretion



H.R. 8 proposing an amendment to the Constitution to prohibit any person involved in a duel from holding federal office  
March 5, 1838

*Records of the U.S. House of Representatives*

25th CONGRESS,  
2d Session.

**H. R. 8.**

MARCH 5, 1838.

Read the first time.

Mr. MORGAN submitted for the consideration of the House of Representatives the following joint resolution :

**RESOLUTION**

Proposing an amendment to the constitution of the United States.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two-thirds of both Houses concurring,) That the following amendment to the constitution of the United States be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States ; which, when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the States, shall be valid, to all intents and purposes, as part of the constitution :*

*Congress shall have power to provide by law that no person shall be capable of holding or being elected to any post of profit or emolument, civil or military, legislative, executive, or judicial, under the Government of these United States, who shall, after the passage of such law, fight a duel, or send or accept a challenge to fight a duel, the probable issue of which may be the death of the challenger or challenged, or who shall be a second to either party, or shall in any way or manner aid or assist in such duel, or shall be knowingly the bearer of such challenge or acceptance ; but*



# Letter from Suzanne Heber Supporting Keating-Owen Child Labor Bill February 25, 1916

*Records of the U.S. Senate*

TELEPHONE WORTH 982  
Commissioner of Deeds

SUZANNE HEBER,  
Public Stenographer  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
280 BROADWAY & 53 CHAMBERS STREET  
MANHATTAN

Law Reporting  
Mimeographing  
Typewriting

February 25, 1916.

Respectfully yours,

*Suzanne Heber*

*One woman who wants the ballat  
for the purpose of helping  
these helpless little ones.*

one of those who are support-  
to protect children who work,  
on the subject, for I cannot  
want to see the lives ground  
labor. I was haunted for days  
first saw some of these children  
s, trying to play after hours.  
use they seemed hardly to have  
people said, "Oh they are not  
ome of the others". As these  
ke corpses, I am glad to say

en's health is more important  
r the stockholders.  
tfully yours,

*Suzanne Heber*

*an who wants the ballat  
purpose of helping  
helpless little ones.*

# The Shape of Our Government

The Founders who wrote the Constitution were uncertain it would work. They were constructing new ways to run a government that had never been tried before. It's not surprising, then, that time would reveal some flaws or inefficiencies. Many proposed amendments would alter how the Federal Government is structured, who participates in government, and how candidates are elected.

## By the Numbers

years, added together, that the United States had no Vice President, before the ratification of the 25th amendment

38

number of Presidents who have served more than two terms (FDR)

1

61.5

years, longest amount of time between amendments (12th and 13th)

538

number of electors in the electoral college



293  
1844

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled :

The undersigned, Citizens of the County of *Ashtabula* in the State of Ohio, pray you to take the necessary measures for procuring an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, making the basis of representation uniform throughout the country; that representation be apportioned to the free inhabitants; but if that is impracticable, that the animal property of the free states be represented as well as the slave property of the slaveholding states.

<i>B. B. Hunter</i>	<i>M. King</i>	<i>Y. B. Saclol</i>
<i>W. P. Beekman</i>	<i>Wm. P. Swan</i>	
<i>J. Baldwin</i>	<i>P. Pierce</i>	
<i>William Dudley</i>	<i>O. D. Hensley</i>	
<i>S. M. Coals</i>	<i>David B. Bost</i>	
<i>W. McArthur</i>	<i>J. B. Waring</i>	
<i>S. Strong</i>	<i>Ludron M. Mott</i>	
	<i>W. L. S. S. S.</i>	

Petition for a constitutional amendment that representation in Congress be apportioned by including the animal property of the free states as well as the slave property of the slaveholding states, circa 1844

*Records of the U.S. House of Representatives*

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled :

The undersigned, Citizens of the County of *Ashtabula* in the State of Ohio, pray you to take the necessary measures for procuring an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, making the basis of representation uniform throughout the country; that representation be apportioned to the free inhabitants; but if that is impracticable, that the animal property of the free states be represented as well as the slave property of the slaveholding states.

<i>B. B. Hunter</i>	<i>M. King</i>	<i>Y. B. Saclol</i>
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Petition for a constitutional  
amendment to expel  
members of Congress who  
are absent for more than 40  
percent of roll call votes  
Circa 1971

*Records of the U.S. Senate*

# Voice Of The People

## Put Lawmakers Back To Work

Dear Editor,  
I wish to submit the following article for your consideration and publication, if possible, along with the blank enclosed which I hope people will fill out and send to the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments in Washington.

The article expressed my views exactly, and I believe a great many other people share this view also.

John Adamson

Are you in favor of forcing absentee Senators and Representatives back to work? If you are, then there's still time

to make your voice heard in Washington on a proposed amendment to the U. S. Constitution which would expel members of Congress who are not present for at least 60 percent of the roll call votes.

The amendment, which was introduced by Senator Margaret Chase Smith (R.-Maine), is being held up by a Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments. According to Sen. Smith, unless there is overwhelming public pressure placed on the subcommittee, her amendment will die quietly and never be reported to the full Senate for vote. This is what the

politicians want. They know that if it ever comes to a vote, the amendment will pass because no Senator will dare vote against it.

Now is your chance to take positive action and force the reluctant politicians to go to work for you, the taxpayer.

Cut out the letter on this page, sign your name and address and send it to Washington.

Don't put it off until tomorrow. Do it now!

Mail to: Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, Committee on the Judiciary, Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C. 20510.

Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments  
Committee on the Judiciary  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senators Birch Bayh, Quentin Burdick, Robert Byrd, Marlow Cook, James Eastland, Miram Fong, Edward Gurney, Roman Hruska, Sam Ervin, Strom Thurmond and John Tunney.

Gentlemen:

I demand that the Constitutional Amendment Subcommittee take immediate action and report Senator Margaret Chase Smith's proposed Constitutional amendment which will expel members of Congress who are absent for more than 40 percent of the roll calls (S. Res. 200) to the full Senate for a vote. I absolutely agree that members of Congress who are absent for more than 40 per cent of the roll call votes should be expelled.

Signature

Street Address

City

State

Zip

*answered*  
Roy C. Clark  
1405-14th St.  
Bedford Ind. 47421



OFFICERS.	
Oliver Wilson, Master.....	Magnolia
F. C. Seiler, Overseer.....	Mt. Carmel
George F. Bell, Lecturer.....	Lostant
C. W. Green, Steward.....	Decatur
E. R. Simmons, Ass't Steward.....	Jerseyville
Mrs. Brilla Cartwright, Chaplain.....	Upper Alton
D. Q. Trotter, Treasurer.....	Piasa
Thomas Keady, Secretary.....	Dunlap
J. B. Hanlon, Gatekeeper.....	Galva
Miss Maggie Helms, Ceres.....	Belleville
Mrs. C. R. Taylor, Pomona.....	Bates
Miss Emma J. Mudge, Flora.....	Peru
Mrs. G. H. Lambert, L. A. S.....	Littleton
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.	
G. R. Tate.....	Smithton
Robert Eaton.....	Joliet
A. H. Yates.....	Dunlap

State Grange of Illinois,

# Patrons of Husbandry,

SECRETARY'S OFFICE.

Dunlap, Ill., Jan 1. 1898.

Petition of the State Grange  
of Illinois for the direct  
election of Senators  
January 1, 1898

Records of the U.S. Senate

Whereas. The United States Senate is  
largely composed of Millionaires, who frequently owe their  
election to the lavish expenditure of money;

Resolved. In order to make them more  
directly accountable to the people, they should be  
elected by popular vote.





Untitled, ["Just the usual  
crop of senatorial  
deadlocks"], cartoon by  
Clifford Berryman  
February 4, 1911

*Records of the U.S. Senate*



Electoral college tally  
for the 1800  
Presidential election  
February 11, 1801

Records of the U.S.  
Senate

	Thomas Jefferson of Virginia	Aaron Burr of New York	John Adams of Massachusetts	Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina	John Jay of New York
New Hampshire			6	6	
Massachusetts			16	16	
Rhode Island			4	3	1
Connecticut			9	9	
Vermont			4	4	
New York	12	12			
New Jersey			7	7	
Pennsylvania	8	8	7	7	
Delaware			3	3	
Maryland	5	5	5	5	
Virginia	21	21			
Kentucky	4	4			
North Carolina					
<hr/>					
	73	73	65	64	1







# How We Amend

It is very easy to propose constitutional amendments. Members of Congress have done it over 11,000 times. But ratifying amendments is very hard—so difficult that it has happened only 27 times.

Article V of the Constitution sets a very high bar for amendments to change our foundational document. It requires a high degree of consensus to ensure that the ideas we adopt are universal and stand the test of time.

## By the Numbers

Article of the Constitution  
that describes the  
amendment process

5

parts of the  
Constitution that  
cannot be amended

2

100

shortest number of days from  
proposal to ratification of an  
amendment, for the 26th  
Amendment which lowered the  
voting age to 18

74,003

longest number of days from proposal  
to ratification of an amendment, for  
the 27th Amendment on congressional  
salaries (~203 years)

7

years, the time limit for  
ratification on most  
modern amendments

# How We Amend



Girl: Huh. Well why not just  
get it right the first time



ARCHIVIST OF THE UNITED STATES  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME,

GREETING:

KNOW YE, That the first Congress session, held in New York, New York, September, in the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety-two, passed the following resolution to the States of America, in the following

The Conventions of a number of the States at the time of their adoption of the Constitution expressed a desire, in order to prevent any misconstruction or abuse of the fifth Article of the original Constitution, that further declaratory and amendatory be added: And as external confidence in the Government is essential to the beneficent ends of its institutions,

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, concurring, that the following proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, as Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all or any of which may be proposed by three fourths of the whole number of the States, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said Constitution, viz.:

Articles in addition to, and amendments to, the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

\* \* \* \* \*

Article the Second...No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Representatives, shall take effect, until after the next election of Representatives shall have taken place.

\* \* \* \* \*

And, further, that Section 106b, Title 1 of the United States Code, that whenever official notice is received at the National Archives and Records Administration that any amendment proposed to the Constitution of the United States has been adopted by the Legislatures of the States, the Archivist of the United States shall forthwith cause the amendment to be published, specifying the States by which the same may have been adopted, and the same has become valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the Constitution of the United States.

And, further, that it appears from official documents of the National Archives of the United States that the following proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all or any of which may be proposed by three fourths of the whole number of the States, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said Constitution, viz.:

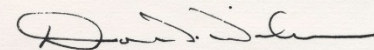
And, further, that the States whose Legislatures have so ratified the said proposed Amendment constitute the requisite three fourths of the whole number of States in the United States.

NOW, Therefore, be it known that I, Don W. Wilson, Archivist of the United States, by virtue and in pursuance of Section 106b, Title 1 of the United States Code, do hereby certify that the aforesaid Amendment has become valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the Constitution of the United States.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF,

I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the National Archives and Records Administration to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this 18th day of May, 1992, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ninety-two.



DON W. WILSON



Certification of the  
ratification of the  
27th Amendment  
to the Constitution  
by the Archivist of  
the United States  
May 18, 1992

General Records of  
the U.S. Government



## National Archives and Records Administration

### Publisher

National Archives and Records Administration

### Contact

Jim Gardner

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# Amending America: Proposed Amendments to the United States Constitution, 1787 to 2014

 Metadata Updated: Mar 07, 2016

This dataset provides information about more than 11,000 proposed Constitutional amendments introduced in the United States Congress from 1787 to 2014. This dataset is a compilation of information from several Congressional publications as well as a search for Constitutional amendments on the Congress.gov website.

Data available for each proposed amendment varies by source publication. Each entry may include a source of information, title or description of amendment, date of introduction, Congress, Congressional session, joint resolution number, sponsor name, sponsor state or territory, and the committee of referral.

The National Archives and Records Administration created this dataset as part of the Amending America initiative. To prepare for the 2016 "Amending America" exhibition at the National Archives Museum in Washington, D.C., NARA volunteers and staff transcribed and edited over 11,000 entries representing proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution, as recorded by Congress.

## Access & Use Information

 **Public:** This dataset is intended for public access and use.

 **License:** Creative Commons CCZero

## Downloads & Resources



**Amending America: Proposed Amendments to the ...**  47 views

This webpage describes and hosts the dataset for more than 11,000 proposed...

 Visit page



**Amending America: Proposed Amendments to the ...**  15 views

This document is the comma-separated values (CSV) version of more than 11,000...

 Download



**Landing Page**

 Visit page

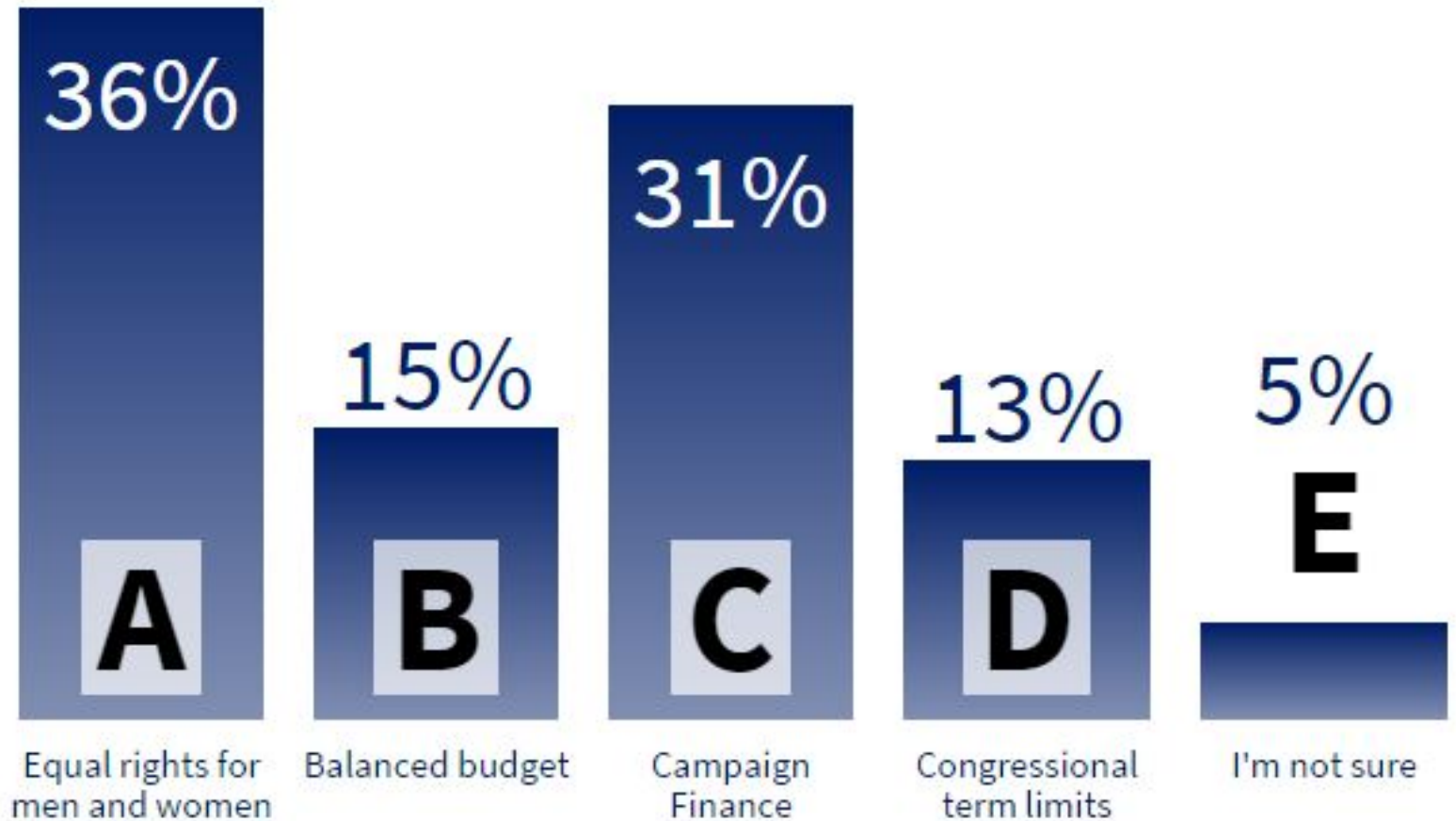


What do YOU  
think?

## There are 27 Amendments. How would you amend the Constitution next?

📱 Text **AMEND** to **22333** once to join, then **A, B, C, D, or E**

🕶️ Answers to this poll are anonymous



*“The plan now to be formed will certainly be defective, as the Confederation has been found on trial to be. Amendments therefore will be necessary, and it will be better to provide for them, in an easy, regular and Constitutional way than to trust to chance and violence.”*

**Virginia delegate George Mason, 1787**



**#AmendingAmerica**







Open at the National Archives  
Building in Washington, D.C.

March 11, 2016-  
September 4, 2017

Download the eBook from the  
iTunes store

<http://archives.gov/amending-america/>



**KNOW YOUR RECORDS**  
National Archives and Records Administration

# Thank you for attending!

If we did not get to your question,  
you may submit it to [inquire@nara.gov](mailto:inquire@nara.gov)

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Today's video recording and materials  
will remain available at  
[www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records)



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