

Happy 233rd Birthday to U.S. Constitution

By Dr. Greg Ferro

Everyone living in America is connected to the Constitution, not only the men and women in the military, or our elected officials who promise to protect and defend it. Every right you have is literally or figuratively contained in the Constitution.

The United States Constitution is America's Rule Book. It connects you to every woman, man, and child living and working in the United States.

Americans focus too much on the presidency. Remember the phrase, "a government of checks and balances." Seven Articles outline the responsibilities for each separate branch of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. *Only Congress* has the power to pass "all laws which shall be necessary and proper" (Article 1, Section 8). *Only Congress* has the power of the purse to control money to be spent by the federal government.

Presidents don't have to say "So help me God" at the end of their presidential oath (Article 2, Section 1). From 1809 to 1913, no president gave a State of the Union speech. It's not required (Article 2, Section 3).

It is the U.S. Supreme Court that decided abortion was legal, that the 2000 vote recount would stop in Florida, and that corporations and unions could contribute unlimited monies to political campaigns. In 2020, the Constitution means whatever five of the nine Supreme Court Justices say it means.

The hallmarks of a strong Constitution are that it distributes power, limits power and allows for the document to be changed. We have changed the Constitution 27 times, with the last amendment in 1992. For the last 232 years, the U.S. Constitution has withstood stormy times, yet evolving to reflect a country different from the 1700s. But many people forget what the Constitution actually says.

Recently, the First and Second Amendments are making the news, but what about the other 25 Amendments? Did you know that five of the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights contain rights for those accused of crimes? The Bill of Rights sought to guarantee the most important rights of the people, and not be subject to a king's whims.

The U.S. Constitution is the foundation of our democracy and must endure for all time. The Preamble states it completely: 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.

Celebrate this most important document by joining our virtual Constitution Day Centre Celebration activities now through October. Explore videos and live Zoom talks on specific Constitution topics. For more information or to preregister, go to: constitutiondaycentre.org