

# Happy Constitution Day! September 17, 2009

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# Happy Constitution Day!

- Written in 1787, the Constitution was signed on September 17th. But it wasn't until 1788 that it was ratified by the necessary nine states.
- The U.S. Constitution was prepared in secret, behind locked doors that were guarded by sentries.



# Happy Constitution Day !

- Some of the original framers and many delegates in the state ratifying conventions were very troubled that the original Constitution lacked a description of individual rights. In 1791, Americans added a list of rights to the Constitution. The first ten amendments became known as The Bill of Rights



# Happy Constitution Day !

- Of the 55 delegates attending the Constitutional Convention, 39 signed and 3 delegates dissented. Two of America's "founding fathers" didn't sign the Constitution. Thomas Jefferson was representing his country in France and John Adams was doing the same in Great Britain



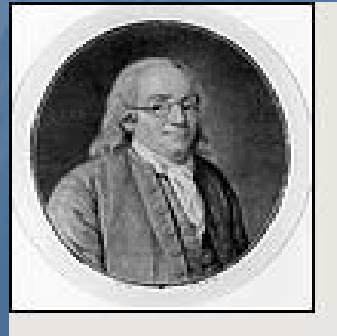
# Happy Constitution Day !

- Established on November 26, 1789, the first national "Thanksgiving Day" was originally created by George Washington as a way of "giving thanks" for the Constitution.



# Happy Constitution Day!

- Of the written national constitutions, the U.S. Constitution is the oldest and shortest.
- At 81, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania was the oldest delegate at the Constitutional Convention and at 26, Jonathon Dayton of New Jersey was the youngest.



# Happy Constitution Day !

- The original Constitution is on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, it was moved to Fort Knox for safekeeping.



# Happy Constitution Day !

- The U.S. Constitution was written in the same Pennsylvania State House where the Declaration of Independence was signed and where George Washington received his commission as Commander of the Continental Army. Now called Independence Hall, the building still stands today on Independence Mall in Philadelphia, directly across from the National Constitution Center.



# Happy Constitution Day!

- More than 11,000 amendments have been introduced in Congress. Thirty three have gone to the states to be ratified and twenty seven have received the necessary approval from the states to actually become amendments to the Constitution.



# Happy Constitution Day !

## ■ Constitution Fun Facts

- At 81, Benjamin Franklin , the “Sage of the Constitutional Convention” , was the oldest delegate and at 26, New Jersey’s Jonathon Dayton was the youngest.



# Happy Constitution Day !

- Constitution Fun Facts

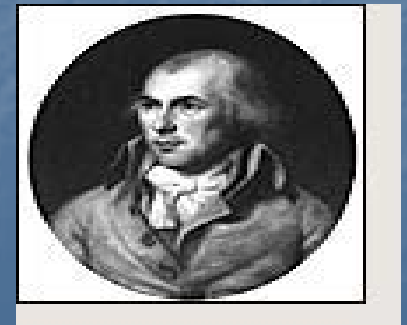
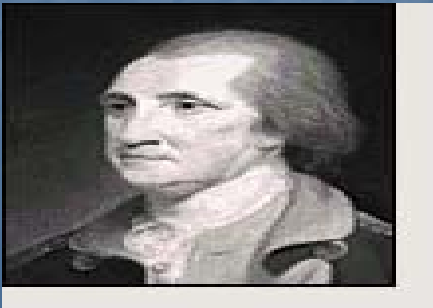
- The first state to ratify the Constitution was Delaware. The last of the original 13 states to ratify was Rhode Island



# Happy Constitution Day!

## ■ Constitution Fun Facts

- George Washington was the tallest delegate to the Constitutional Convention at 6' 2".
- His fellow Virginian, James Madison, was the shortest at 5' 4 '.



# Happy Constitution Day!

## ■ Constitution Fun Facts

- Although he was the presiding officer for the Constitutional Convention, George Washington did not actually participate in the debates. During the Convention's recesses, his favorite pastime was fishing in the waters near Valley Forge



# Happy Constitution Day!

## ■ Constitution Fun Facts

- More than 11,000 amendments have been introduced in Congress. 33 have gone to the states to be ratified and 27 has received the necessary approval from states to become Constitutional Amendments



# Happy Constitution Day!

- Constitution Fun Facts

- Disagreements at the convention were so constant and tense that Benjamin Franklin proposed that the delegates start each day with a group prayer – and they could not agree on that,



# Happy Constitution Day!

## ■ Constitution Fun Facts

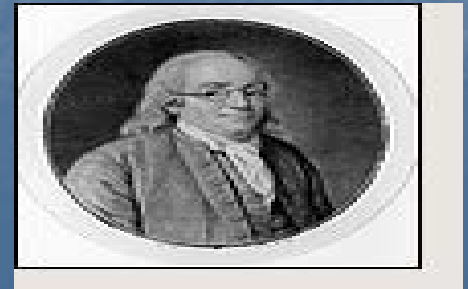
- Three of the original states – Massachusetts, Connecticut and Georgia – did not get around to ratifying the Bill of Rights until 1939, 150 years after it was originally proposed.



# Happy Constitution Day!

## ■ Constitution Fun Facts

- It was a particularly hot and humid summer in Philadelphia when the framers met. Ben Franklin was known to use a special invention of his to cool off – a rocking chair equipped with a fan powered by its own motion. The framers kept the windows closed to keep their deliberations confidential



# Happy Constitution Day!

- Constitution Fun Facts

- The Constitutional Convention began in Philadelphia on May 25, 1787. The document was signed on September 17 and ratified on June 21, 1788



# Happy Constitution Day!

- “In each generation, with toils and tears, we have had to earn our heritage again...If we fail now, then we will have forgotten in abundance what we learned in hardship: that democracy rests on faith, that freedom asks more than it gives, and the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored....”

*President Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Inaugural Address*

# Happy Constitution Day!

- “Freedom is the recognition that no single person, no single authority or government has a monopoly on the truth, but that every individual life is infinitely precious, that every one of us put on this earth has been put here for a reason and has something to offer...”

*President Ronald Reagan, May 31, 1988*