***Preamble to the Bill of Rights***

**\*Congress of the United States**

begun and held at the City of New-York, on Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.

**THE** Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution. **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 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.

Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg Speaker of the House of Representatives John Adams, Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate.

Attest, John Beckley, Clerk of the House of Representatives. Sam. A. Otis Secretary of the Senate. \*On September 25, 1789, Congress transmitted to the state legislatures twelve proposed amendments, two of which, having to do with Congressional representation and Congressional pay, were not adopted.  The remaining ten amendments became the Bill of Rights.

**Amendment 1***- Freedom of Religion, Speech, and the Press*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

**Amendment 2***- The Right to Bear Arms*

A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed.

**Amendment 3***- The Housing of Soldiers*

No 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 to be prescribed by law.

**Amendment 4***- Protection from Unreasonable Searches and Seizures*

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

**Amendment 5***- Protection of Rights to Life, Liberty, and Property*

No person shall be held to answer for a capital or otherwise infamous crime unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

**Amendment 6**- Rights of Accused Persons in Criminal Cases

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the 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 defense.

**Amendment 7***- Rights in Civil Cases*

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States than according to the rules of the common law.

**Amendment 8***- Excessive Bail, Fines, and Punishments Forbidden*

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

**Amendment 9***- Other Rights Kept by the People*

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

**Amendment 10***- Undelegated Powers Kept by the States and the People*

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

[**Amendment 13:**](http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xiii)

***Section 1.****Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*

***Section 2.****Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.*

* The 13th Amendment is perhaps the most important amendment in American history. Ratified in 1865, it was the first of three "Reconstruction amendments" that were adopted immediately following the Civil War.
* While the amendment has rarely been interpreted by the courts, its effect on American society cannot be underestimated. Many slaves had already technically been freed by President Lincoln's [Emancipation Proclamation](https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/emancipation-proclamation), but the 13th Amendment solidified their legal status as free men and women.

[**Amendment 14:**](http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xiv)

***Section 1.****All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*

[Sections 2 through 5 omitted for brevity]

* Adopted in 1868, this is the second of the "Reconstruction amendments" and one of the most far-reaching of the non-Bill of Rights amendments. This is mainly due to Section 1, which contains four major clauses: the Citizenship Clause, the Privileges & Immunities Clause, the Due Process Clause, and the Equal Protection Clause. The remaining sections deal with post-Civil War governmental administration.

[**Amendment 15:**](http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-xv)

***Section 1.****The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.*

***Section 2.****The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.*

* The third of the "Reconstruction amendments", the 15th Amendment was adopted in 1870 and was intended to guarantee the voting rights of former slaves and other African-American citizens. However, many states found ways to circumvent the amendment's purpose by instituting poll taxes, literacy tests, race-restricted primary elections, and other discriminatory criteria. This discrimination was eventually held illegal by the 24th Amendment, several major Supreme Court cases, and the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](https://www.justice.gov/crt/history-federal-voting-rights-laws).