



Constitutional Change Through Amendments

“Amendments to the Constitution ought to not be too frequently made;... [if] continually tinkered with it would lose all its prestige and dignity, and the old instrument would be lost sight of altogether in a short time.”

— **Andrew Johnson** (White House speech, February 22, 1866)

“... when we shall have our amendment to the Constitution of the United States, everyone will think it was always so, just exactly as many young people believe that all the privileges, all the freedom, all the enjoyments which woman now possesses were always hers. They have no idea of how every single inch of ground that she stands upon today has been gained by the hard work of some little handful of women of the past.”

— **Susan B. Anthony** (in History of Woman Suffrage, 1902)

A Sampling of Proposed, but Failed, U.S. Constitution Amendments

If passed, the amendment would:

- Apportion one member of Congress for every 30,000 people
- Outlaw dueling in the United States
- Abolish the United States Senate
- Choose the President by drawing names from a list of retiring U.S. Senators
- Establish two Presidents—one for Southern States and one for Northern States
- Rename our nation, “The United States of the World”
- Set term limits for members of the U.S. Congress
- Abolish the U.S. Army and Navy
- Require a two-thirds vote in both chambers of Congress for all bills raising taxes
- Allow naturalized (non-natural born) Americans to become President
- Make English the official language of the United States
- Repeal the 22nd Amendment (i.e., lift term limits on the President)
- Forbid public drunkenness in the United States and its territories
- Call for the return of the Gold Standard
- Ban divorces in the United States
- Acknowledge Jesus Christ and God as the Supreme Ruler of the universe
- Impose a 25 percent maximum limit on taxable income
- Grant the President a line-item veto
- Establish a 12-year term on U.S. Supreme Court Justices
- Eliminate retroactive taxation
- Place a \$1 million ceiling on individual wealth
- Guarantee every citizen the right to a clean, safe and sustainable environment
- Prohibit interracial marriage
- Clarify the meaning of the Second Amendment
- Strike the Second Amendment from the Bill of Rights
- Abolish the Office of Vice President
- Confer statehood on Washington, DC
- Legalize same-sex marriage
- Establish a run-off election if no presidential candidate receives over a 50 percent vote



- Guarantee people living in U.S. territories the right to vote for U.S. President
- Bar any constitutional amendment from outlawing slavery in the United States
- Prohibit federal court-ordered, unfunded mandates for state and local governments
- Repeal the 26th Amendment and permit all 16 year-olds the right to vote
- Remove any constitutional protections concerning pornography
- Replace the President with a three-person Executive Council
- Bar the death penalty in the United States
- Require a national referendum before declaring war
- Guarantee the right of citizens to segregate themselves from others
- Allow the repeal of federal laws by a vote of the people
- Abolish the Electoral College
- Prohibit the federal government from engaging in business competition with its citizens
- Extend the terms of U.S. Representatives from two to four years
- Protect the right to deliver prayers in public schools and buildings
- Mandate a balanced federal budget
- Guarantee every U.S. citizen the right to health care of equally high quality
- Proscribe all involuntary bussing of school children
- Provide for one seven-year term for President of the United States
- Restrict executive pardons during the last four months of a President's term
- Authorize Congress to impose spending limits on all federal elections
- Recognize that "life begins at conception" and guarantee unborn children constitutional rights
- Guarantee every person the right to home ownership
- Strip U.S. citizenship from anyone accepting a foreign title without congressional approval
- Limit the effect of treaties on domestic affairs
- Grant the U.S. Congress exclusive authority to outlaw child labor
- Repeal the 16th Amendment (federal income tax)
- Enable voters to recall U.S. Senators and Congress members from office
- Outlaw the early release of prisoners
- Guarantee equal pay for equal work
- Impose "In God We Trust" as our official national motto
- Ban clergy for serving in the government or receiving federal monies
- Guarantee all citizens the right to education of equally high quality
- Authorize Congress to impose spending limits on state and local election campaigns
- Make illegal the unauthorized burning of the American flag
- Lower the minimum age to run for the U.S. Senate and House to 21 years
- Deny U.S. citizenship to children born on American soil to undocumented aliens
- Guarantee women the right to reproductive freedom
- Limit the federal Census to U.S. citizens only

"We have seen that the American Constitution has changed, is changing, and by the law of its existence must continue to change, in its substance and practical working even when its words remain the same."

—James Bryce (The American Commonwealth, 1924)

"You will find no justification in any of the language of the Constitution for delay in reforms which the mass of American people now demand."

—Franklin D. Roosevelt (Address, 1939)