

# THE CIVIL WAR CONSTITUTION

## CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, 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.

### Article. I.

**Section. 1.** All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

**Section. 2. ...**

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed,

three fifths of all other Persons. ...

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

**Section. 3.** The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

...

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be

## ANNOTATIONS

**States' rights debate: was the Constitution written/ratified by sovereign states, or by the American people as a whole?**

**Representation in the House is based on state population. In the decades prior to the war, northern states' populations (and thus representation in Congress) grew faster than those of southern states.**

### The Three-Fifths Clause

**1868: Impeachment of Andrew Johnson**

**Equal representation in the Senate; here the southern states held onto their congressional power longer than they did in the House of Representatives.**

**1868: Impeachment of Andrew Johnson**

convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

...

**Section. 5. ...**

Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

...

**Section. 8.** The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

**1868: Impeachment of Andrew Johnson**

**1861: Congress expels several southern members when their states secede.**

**The tax power: source of controversy during the tariff dispute of 1828 and the Nullification Crisis of 1832.**

**The war power: Congress, not the president, has the power to declare war.**

**Congress enacts regulations for the armed forces.**

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions; To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of Particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards and other needful Buildings;—And To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

**Section. 9.** The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases or Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed. No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census of Enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear or pay Duties in another.

...

**Congress calls out and regulates state militias**

**The implied powers clause. If it's related to one of the above powers, Congress can do it.**

**Congress may not ban the international importation of slaves until 1808; Congress does so that year.**

**The ability to suspend Habeas Corpus is placed in an article that generally deal with powers and limitations on Congress, but in 1861 it was Lincoln who first suspended it. Did he have the authority to do so?**

**Does this make the blockade unconstitutional or a de facto recognition of the Confederacy?**

## Article. II.

**Section. 1.** The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America.

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In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President ... .

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

**Section. 2.** The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to Grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

...

**Section. 3.** ...[H]e may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them;

...

he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed;

...

**Section. 4.** The President, Vice President and all Civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

**1865: Assassination of Lincoln.**

**The presidential oath; Lincoln relied heavily on this passage when justifying his actions.**

**The president as commander-in-chief. The main source of the president's war powers. Lincoln relied heavily on this passage to justify his actions during the war; he also took an active role in directing national strategy and choosing army leadership.**

**April 1861: Lincoln summons Congress to meet in July.**

**The most important constitutional passage for Lincoln.**

**1868: Impeachment of Andrew Johnson.**

## **Article. III.**

**Section. 1.** The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish....

**Section. 2.** The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public ministers and Consuls;—to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;—between a State and Citizens of another State;—between Citizens of different States;—between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.

In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact, with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.

The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law have directed.

**Section. 3.** Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

**Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court: its extent becomes a question during Congressional Reconstruction.**

**What about crimes under martial law?**

**Northerners argue that Confederates are traitors: but in that case why not try them (i.e., millions of them) for treason instead of putting them in POW camps and disenfranchising them? A difficult issue.**

## Article. IV.

**Section. 1.** Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

**Section. 2.** The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.

...

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

**Section. 3.** New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

## Article. V.

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid Congress ...

**Must a northern state respect a southern state's law of slavery if a southerner brings a slave into a northern state? A cause of friction in the years before the war.**

**The Fugitive Slave Clause: the constitutional basis for the federal fugitive slave laws of 1793 and 1850, and a huge source of contention between North and South before the war. See *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*, 1842.**

**1861-1863: The unconstitutional creation of West Virginia**

**Slavery in the federal territories: one of the main causes, if not the main cause, of secession. See the Missouri Compromise, ca. 1820; the Wilmot Proviso, 1846; The Compromise of 1850; The Kansas-Nebraska Act, 1854; and the Dred Scott case, 1857.**

**The amendment process. See the Corwin Amendment and Crittenden Compromise, 1861. See also the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.**

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## Amendment I

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.

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## Amendment V

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 offence 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.

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## Amendment VI

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 defence.

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## Amendment X

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.

**Lincoln's arrest of "copperheads" and war protesters. See Burnside's General Order Number 38, 1863; *Ex parte Vallandigham*, 1864.**

**What about trials of civilians by military commissions? See *Ex parte Milligan*, 1866; *Ex parte McCardle*, 1867.**

**The Dred Scott case, 1857: a black man's right to liberty versus a white slaveowner's right to property (i.e., a slave).**

**What about trials of civilians by military commissions? See *Ex parte Milligan*, 1866; *Ex parte McCardle*, 1867.**

**States' rights; does a state retain the power to secede? Does it retain all powers not *expressly* granted to Congress, such as a regulatory tariff power?**

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## AMENDMENT XIII

*Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.*

### **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.

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## AMENDMENT XIV

*Passed by Congress June 13, 1866. Ratified July 9, 1868.*

### **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.

### **Section 2.**

Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be

**Abolition of slavery. The only time the word “slavery” appears in the Constitution. This is the sort of Amendment that Southerners feared from 1820 on. Was their fear a self-fulfilling prophecy or would it have happened even without secession and war?**

**Ratified only because of federal coercion of the southern states, which Congress declared had no legal governments (but if that’s the case, how could those governments ratify an amendment?).**

**The citizenship clause, which effectively overruled the Dred Scott case.**

**Due Process limitations are extended against the state governments (the Fifth Amendment Due Process Clause restricts only the national government).**

**Enfranchisement of blacks; disenfranchisement of former Confederates.**



reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

### **Section 3.**

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

### **Section 4.**

The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

### **Section 5.**

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

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## AMENDMENT XV

*Passed by Congress February 26, 1869. Ratified February 3, 1870.*

### **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 the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**Former Confederates may not hold office until Congress says they can. Congress said they could in the Amnesty Act of 1872, which helped restore southern states to the “Redeemers” control.**

**Confederate war debt dishonored.**

**Black suffrage: If the federal government or a state denies the right to vote to a black person, it must be for some reason other than “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”**