

New Hampshire ratifies the US Constitution, June 21, 1788

On this day in history, June 21, 1788, New Hampshire ratifies the US Constitution. The 9th state to do so, this ratification makes the new Constitution the official law of the land, according to its requirement that 9 of the original 12 involved in its creation must ratify it in order for it to take effect. (Rhode Island was not a part of the Constitution's creation.)

The US Constitution is the longest existing national constitution in the world. Its creation was a history changing event that guaranteed the rights of the average person against arbitrary and tyrannical government. Its adoption is arguably one of the greatest events in human history. Nations around the world have sought to emulate its principles ever since its adoption.

The United States Constitution enshrines the rights of the people by limiting the powers of the federal government. It guarantees people the right to self-rule in their local states with only certain powers granted to the federal government. The Constitution defines the basic structure of the United States government, which is a lawmaking body (the legislature) elected by the citizens of the states, an executive (the President) charged with carrying out those laws and a judiciary (the Supreme Court and other federal courts) to decide cases of conflict.

The Constitution also guarantees sweeping rights to the people, such as freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right to bear arms, the right to trial by jury, limitations on government powers, freedom from cruel and unusual punishments and many more.

The Constitution relies on several key doctrines such as "consent of the governed," "separation of powers," the idea that all men have the right to "life, liberty and property," that it is government's role to protect

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these rights, and the idea that government does not create or grant rights, but that these rights are granted to individuals by nature by virtue of their being human.

The Constitution was originally written as a remedy for the weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation, America's first governing document. The Articles had not created a strong enough central government to sustain and perpetuate itself. Many voices called for revising the Articles. The Constitutional Convention met in Philadelphia from May through September of 1787 to draft the new document. The Constitution was then passed to the thirteen states. Each state held its own Constitutional convention to decide whether or not to ratify. The document required that 9 states ratify it in order for it to become law.

New Hampshire was the 9th state to vote in the affirmative on June 21, 1788, making the Constitution law for those states which had accepted it. Eleven of the original thirteen colonies had ratified it by July of that year and the new government formally started on March 4, 1789. By May of 1790, the final two holdouts, North Carolina and Rhode Island ratified the Constitution, making one new nation of the thirteen colonies which rebelled against Great Britain in the American Revolution.