

## CONSTITUTION DAY

### Interesting Facts About the Constitution

1. The Delegates who wrote the Constitution were actually sent to Philadelphia to improve the *Articles of Confederation*, which proved powerless to control foreign and interstate commerce, and did not even provide for a national Executive. Instead, the Delegates worked in secret to create a completely new document and a brand new way to govern.
2. The Delegates met in the same Pennsylvania State House where the Declaration of Independence was written and signed.
3. The youngest delegate, from New Jersey, was but 26 years old, while the oldest, from the neighboring state of Pennsylvania, was Ben Franklin, at a frail 81.
4. 55 delegates met to draft the Constitution but only 39 actually signed it. 14 of the 55 left early, though one gave authority for a colleague to sign for him, and three refused to sign (notably, George Mason of Virginia).
5. Yet, the Constitution asserts that it was signed by "...unanimous consent of the States Present;" technically true because all states present (that is, all but Rhode Island) did sign, just not all of the delegates of each state.
6. Ratification of the Constitution was not by "the people" but by state ratification conventions.
7. The closest call in ratifying was New York which approved by a vote 30 to 27.
8. George Washington, who presided over the Constitutional Convention, received the unanimous vote of all voting Electors, in the first Presidential election. 12 Electors, however, did not vote. Two each from Virginia and Maryland chose not to vote, and all 8 electors from New York failed to vote because New York could not agree who would represent the state.

9. Only Congress and the states have any direct involvement in the Constitutional Amendment process. While a President can influence that process, the Constitution does not require that an Amendment go through the President.
  
10. While all federal officers are required to swear an oath to support and defend the Constitution, the Constitution forbids there being a religious qualification (“...No religious test shall ever be required...,”[Article VI, Clause 3]).