

Why do americans amend the united states constitution? essay samples

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The United States Constitution is a document that was drafted during the year 1787. The document outlines the framework of the United States Government—its functions and limitations—as well as the rights of United States citizens. The Founding Fathers, gathering over 225 years ago, understood that they were creating a new system of government, with provisions and freedoms without precedent. They also understood that they could not foresee every possible shortcoming, flaw, or necessary change to their future system of government. With that in mind, the members at the Constitutional Convention added an article that allowed for changing the framework of the document.

Changing the Constitution is commonly referred to as adding an amendment. However, The United States Constitution is tough to amend. There are two ways the Constitution can be amended. First, the House of Representatives and Senate both need a two-thirds vote to pass an amendment proposal. Then the proposed amendment is sent to the States for ratification which requires a three-fourths vote to pass. There is a second method also, in which two-thirds of the state legislatures call for an amendment convention, though this method has never been used.

So why would the United States want to amend the Constitution? As stated earlier, the Founding Fathers understand that they could not create an infallible document with wording included that would have a provision for every possible problem—but they came quite close. The Constitution has been in effect for 226 years and in that time only 27 amendments have been ratified. The first 10 amendments were installed and ratified instantly and known as the Bill of Rights. That means the remaining 17 amendments were

ratified over a period of 226 years. In other words, that is one amendment every 13.3 years.

The original ten amendments to the Constitution—commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights—explain universal truths that would not change over time. But additional provisions proved necessary; the 13th Amendment, for example, abolished slavery in the United States. This provision today seems archaic and unfathomable, yet at the time it was a contested issue. The 15th Amendment also provides for interesting analysis as it abolished the restriction on voting based on color or race. This amendment, therefore, allowed minorities, especially African-Americans, the right to vote. However, that right was not, at the time, extended to women as well, until roughly 50 years later with the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

The Constitution of the United States was created in an attempt to create a more perfect system of government than was previously experienced. The Founding Father's, however, understood their limitations, and therefore included a provision that gave citizens the ability to change the document as necessary. This provision proved essential. Without it, perhaps a rewrite of the entire Constitution would have been necessary for each monumental shift in society's perspective. The evolution of culture, rights, and the incorporation of citizens into society, demonstrated the necessity of change to grow and sustain this great country.