



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on September 16, 2011

Celebrating Constitution Day 2011

John Adams said the Constitution was the result of "the greatest single effort of national deliberation that the world has ever seen." His praise was not exaggerated; by this document the Founding Fathers framed a republican form of government unique in history, restrained within strictly defined lawful bounds. It set up limited powers for the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Because its authors knew governments tend toward corruption, they added a Bill of Rights — the original 10 amendments to the Constitution — stipulating all the things the Federal government is not allowed to do.



Sadly, many Americans today undervalue the worth of our founding documents and the safeguards of freedom they provide. A [Pew Poll](#) taken in May found a minority of 45 percent of Americans believe the Supreme Court should base its rulings on the original intent of the U.S. Constitution. This number is made up largely of Republicans, Tea Party members, and older Americans. Fifty percent say the Court should interpret the document based on "current-day understanding." Democrats and younger Americans tend to hold this opinion.

How much do citizens really know about the Constitution and the intent of its authors? A national survey conducted by [FindLaw](#) in 2006 revealed 78 percent of adults in this country believe the Constitution and its amendments guarantee the right to vote. (It protects against voting discrimination, but there is no right-to-vote provision.) Another 64 percent say a right to pursue happiness is covered, but that is actually among the list of "inalienable rights" mentioned in the [Declaration of Independence](#).

Twenty-eight percent think a right to public education is constitutionally protected; 12 percent believe both a right to housing and a right to healthcare are. Yet none of these terms is even mentioned once.

How well do you know our country's founding document? You can test your knowledge at the website [ConstitutionFacts.com](#), which provides a 10-question [quiz](#) and a 50-question [test](#) to challenge your patriotic prowess. Each year in honor of Constitution Day, the website tallies results of the quizzes based on the home states of the respondents. This year, New Hampshire placed first with the highest average score on the short quiz of 6.56. Massachusetts brags the top spot with the most respondents, 13.8 percent, who achieved perfect scores. To see how your state measures up, you can access the complete survey results [here](#).

But the findings also reveal "questions that were answered correctly least often concerned the powers of the federal government." Most people could not accurately answer questions about what kinds of laws Congress can make, which Article of the Constitution lists the primary powers of Congress, or the number of votes required to pass a Constitutional amendment.

If you want to boost your chances to score well, first watch this 30-minute tutorial, [Overview of America](#), produced by [The John Birch Society](#). It provides everything you need to know about what our



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founders intended for us and teaches an appreciation for the timeless moral principles that make our Constitution great.

Happy Constitution Day, and God bless America!

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