



The Constitution Still Matters

Even if it did not make much news on Constitution Day



Share and speak up for justice, law & order...



As the [American Revolutionary War](#) concluded in 1781, the work to establish a system of government for the new nation began. The ideals expressed in the [Declaration of Independence](#) burned brightly. However, in its first years, America struggled in outlining the form and substance of the national political union. From May through September 1787, the states held a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Our [U.S. Constitution](#) was agreed upon by the delegates on the 17th of September. Most Americans are not aware that we are to honor that day, each year, as [Constitution Day](#). Our nation is once again in the midst of a political struggle, and we would be wise to remember that the constitution still matters.

Why the Constitution Matters

The U.S. Constitution is essential to ensuring simultaneously both the protection of individual liberties and the advancement of public safety. Without question, both the Declaration of Independence and the constitution are inspired works. They clearly affirmed that the law and justice are not to be left to kings or oligarchs to define. Might does not make right. Those in power may not do as they alone decide. They may not abuse their authority or their fellow citizens.

There is a higher authority, and as Americans we understand (*or at least we used to*) that we are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. Yes, of course those words are from the Declaration of Independence. Yet, it is the U.S. Constitution, together with the [Bill of Rights](#) and the other amendments, that binds our government to honoring our rights and liberties.

A Republic if You Can Keep It

According to [James McHenry](#), a Maryland delegate to the convention, Benjamin Franklin was approached on that September day in 1787 by a woman in Philadelphia. She asked Mister Franklin what form of government the convention had been decided upon. Franklin is said to have responded: “A republic. If you can keep it.”



As noted in our [Independence Day editorial](#), the success of the American Revolution did not just defy the odds. The blessings of liberty are indeed a gift from God. But, a people and nation that turns their backs on God leaves their liberties vulnerable to a godless

system of power. We have seen such systems in the former Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and elsewhere. The sting of tyranny in such places is harsh and deadly.

Resistance to Tyranny and Evil

Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German citizen, was an ardent anti-Nazi theologian. He sought to keep Nazi influences out of the churches in Germany, and he was active in the resistance movement. In 1942, following ten years of Nazi rule in his country, he wrote *"After Ten Years,"* providing guidance to his fellow Germans on the moral response to the evils of Nazi rule. In essence, Bonhoeffer observed that to ignore evil is to be complicit.

Bonhoeffer was aware that many in his country had been doing just that – ignoring the evils of the Nazis.. Most did so out of fear that they might suffer the cost of resistance. On this point, Bonhoeffer provided moral clarity: *"It is infinitely easier to suffer through putting one's bodily life at stake than to suffer through the spirit."* That is to say, even with physical suffering, resisting evil is morally required. And in not opposing evil, one will suffer spiritually.

The Nazis first imprisoned and then ultimately hung Bonhoeffer. He valiantly died a martyr's death, and his example justifiably lives on. It is one that we are right to consider as we acknowledge the importance of our constitution.

Stupidity and Evil

In *"After Ten Years,"* Bonhoeffer also drew a connection between stupidity (*particularly deliberate stupidity*) and evil. He concluded that stupidity poses a more dangerous threat to "the good" than does malice. He argued that such was true because stupidity is resistant to reason. Here, Bonhoeffer is not speaking to a person's intellectual capacity, rather to a lacking in what might be described as a level of moral acumen within the individual.

From this understanding, "stupid people" (particularly "deliberately stupid" people) are more easily prompted to accept and perpetrate evil than other people. An excellent, yet brief, summary video of this theory is provided below. [The video was produced and made available by [Sprouts Schools](#).]



Bonhoeffer's theory relative to how tyrants rise to power does provide our nation with reason for caution. First, when the political arena is reduced to simple slogans and soundbites, reason suffers. Second, when more than half of the eligible electorate abstains from voting, the republic is weakened. Third, when the nation becomes detached from who controls the levers of power, troubling corruption takes firm root. Fourth, when the rule of law is compromised, all liberty is placed in jeopardy. It is our constitution that has helped our nation prevent the rise of an abusive government on par with that experienced in Bonhoeffer's Germany.

Hold Firmly to Freedom

As [Ronald Reagan](#) observed in January 1967: *"Freedom is a fragile thing and it's never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not ours by way of inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people."*

Our constitution protects our [American ideals](#). No one person is above the law, all are equal before the law, and none are without its protections. Furthermore, all those who wield governmental authority are accountable to the people.

For all of those concerned about justice, equality, liberty, and public safety, Constitution Day is an opportunity for renewed intellectual and moral commitment to the principles on which the nation was founded. At **Secure 1776**, we still firmly believe the U.S. Constitution matters. The constitution remains the foundation on which both individual liberty and public safety rest.

May each of us celebrate both our founding ideals and our republic, and may we as a people, thank God for the blessing of our liberties.

Share and speak up for justice, law & order...



Tags: [constitution](#) [U.S. Constitution](#)



Secure 1776

Secure 1776 is a public safety professional resource that is dedicated to helping foster enhanced public safety – particularly in the field of law enforcement. Secure 1776 offers professional training and consulting services, as well as analysis of key news and research related to public safety. You can find out more at: www.secure1776.us



Related Posts



The Essential Police Policy Principles

🕒 August 20, 2022