

Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Written by Grassley Press

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Q. What are Constitution Day and Citizenship Day?

A. Constitution Day is celebrated on September 17, because the Constitution of the United States was signed on September 17, 1787. Constitution Day is also Citizenship Day, a day that recognizes all who have become U.S. citizens, whether by birth or immigration.

Originally, U.S. citizenship was celebrated on the third Sunday of every May, on a day known as "I Am An American Day." In 1952, this day was moved to September 17, to celebrate citizens and the Constitution. Until 2004, the official name of this holiday was Citizenship Day. It is now known as "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day."

Q. Why should we celebrate our Constitution and Citizenship?

A. The Constitution is the framework for our democracy. It was adopted by the Constitutional Convention 223 years ago, ratified by the original 13 states, and it continues to guide us today. In the United States, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. The Constitution embodies the enduring philosophical principles in the Declaration of Independence; that the limited government created by the Constitution only exercise power by the consent of the governed.

That philosophy is clearly stated in the Declaration's second paragraph: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..." The Constitution is a statement of this philosophical belief in limited government. All power rests with the people, and the Constitution is a compact where the American people delegate certain enumerated powers to the government in order to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."

September 17 is also a day to celebrate the honor, and reflect on the responsibilities, of U.S. citizenship.

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