

Mallory Doyle
Grade 8
Age 12

We, the People: Coming Together as One

“We, the People” is not only the beginning start of a significant document known as the Constitution but also one that describes the attitude of the people it serves to protect. As Americans, we are a group that is comprised of people of all ages, walks of life, backgrounds and education. However, under the Constitution, we are first people, we are one, one body and one voice for equality and fairness for all.

Starting as an idea to fix the Articles of the Confederation that were not working, the Constitution was drafted by a group of 55 men in 1787 known as the Framers. Similar to framing a house, piece by piece, these men, started to construct a way of government that would benefit all, examining each part and once put together, a majestic and solid foundation. Simply, once done it addressed the individual liberties of citizens and how much power should a governing body have over those citizens. It is still in place today and serves as a blueprint of how government should work.

Clay Henry, former Secretary of State to President John Quincy Adams stated, “The Constitution of the United States was made not merely for the generation that then existed, but for posterity- unlimited, undefined, endless, perpetual posterity.”

There are seven Articles of the Constitution, each addressing a specific part of the workings of our government. Collectively, they cover the Legislative Branch, Executive Branch, Judicial Branch, States, Amendments, Debts/Supremacy/Oaths and the Ratification.

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Article I, which has 10 sections, carefully outlines how Congress is created into two parts, the Senate and House of Representatives and its responsibilities in creating laws. It gives clear requirements on who is eligible to participate, term limits and the roles and responsibilities for each person that participates. Especially important are the rules of what limits each person or role has.

Article II, which has 4 sections, outlines the job and role of the President and Vice-President of the United States, also known as the Executive Branch.

Article III, which has 3 sections, establishes the Judicial Branch, which is made up of the highest court, the Supreme Court. The court has the ability to decide if a law can be upheld or is against the Constitution in place.

Article IV, which has 4 sections spells out the rights of each State and how they work with the federal laws.

Article V, outlines how changes and amendments can be made to the Constitution and how to make those changes.

Article VI, deals with Supremacy, Debts and Oaths. This article talks about debts and repayments, how the Constitution will be supreme law in our land and the standard of measurement for all courts.

Article VII, the shortest of them all, in one sentence explains the ratification or approval process of the Constitution.

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As original planned, the Constitution has been used to determine the outcome of many important issues in our country. Recently, the President was in the media because of a decision to stop the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy that was issued as an Executive Order by a former President. Our current President stated he was trying to enforce Article VI which states that we should follow the rule of law, which are immigration laws in this matter.

At the end of the 19th century, the US Supreme Court decided that Congress had the ability to regulate immigration. This is covered in Article I, under section 8. It states that they have the right to define borders and restrict entrance.

By granting the DACA policy under Executive Order, the former President worked outside of the checks and balances and upset the separation of powers put in place under Articles I, II, III. Those articles outline the limits of power that any one branch of government has, the laws are put in place by the Legislative branch and did not follow the right process. By not adhering to the process, it allowed people that are not following the laws in place to remain and live in the United States unpunished. It goes against every aspect of the Constitution. Only Congress is allowed to make laws and the President is supposed to enforce them, not the other way around.

DACA was created to protect the children of illegal immigrants. Because they did not choose to break the law, it was felt that these innocent children should be protected from any punishments or deportations that the parents might face. This is seen as a moral obligation but it is still a violation of the Constitution the way that it is written.

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How this will be resolved in the future will now fall to Congress to legislate, but this issue highlights what great foresight our Founding Fathers and Framers had. Based on the strong foundation and principles put in place, there may be some additions or remodeling done to help sustain our rights, but our foundation is strong and will not demolish, standing firm today as it did hundreds of years ago.