

Amending the United States Constitution

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Option 1:
An amendment may be proposed as a result of a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote by both bodies of the US Congress.
(used for every amendment)

Initiation

Option 2:
An amendment may be proposed after $\frac{2}{3}$ of state legislatures calling for a constitutional convention.
(never used)

Ratification

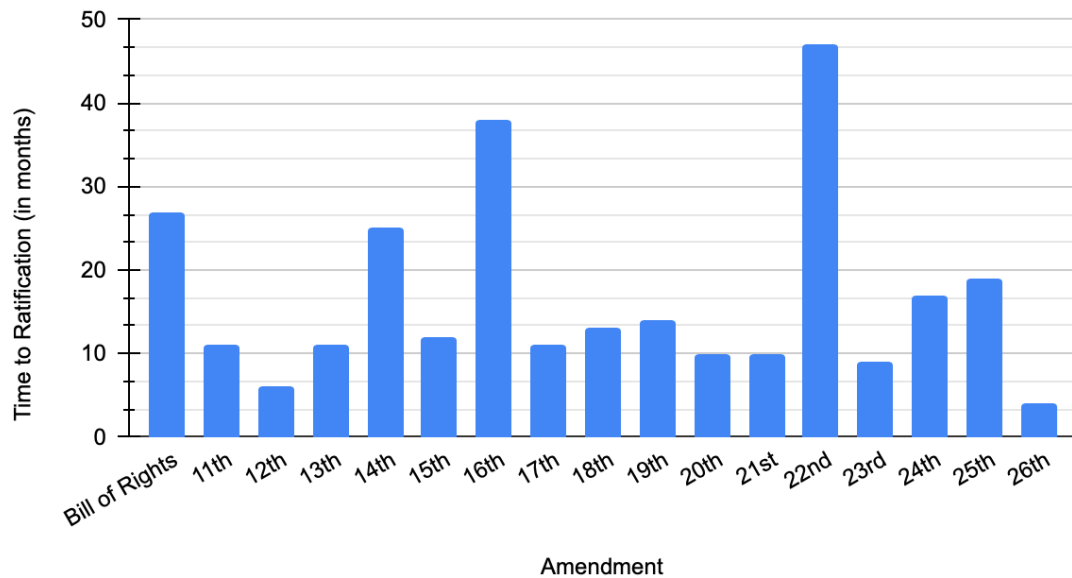
1) The Archivist of the United States sends a letter of notification to each state's governor. This allows each state to consider the amendment for ratification.

2) The governor of each state then submits the proposed amendment for the consideration of the state body. Depending on the instructions of Congress, this body with either be the state's legislature, or a convention.

3) Once states approve of the amendment, they send the approval to the Archivist of the United States. The Office of the Federal Register holds all of these documents until the amendment passes or fails.

4) When 38 out of 50 states approve of an amendment, an amendment has been ratified.

Time (in months) from Amendment Initiation to Ratification



*the 27th Amendment is not depicted on this graph, because of the extreme length of time from initiation to ratification. The duration was 202 years and 8 months, with ratification in 1992

18th - 19th Century Amendments

Bill of Rights (1st-10th) - written by James Madison in response to the requests of many states to add a "bill of rights"; this was a condition of ratification for 5 states

1791

12th Amendment - a response to the Election of 1796, where a President and Vice President from opposing parties were elected. Also, a response to the Election of 1800, and the struggle to elect a president.

1804

1795

11th Amendment - a response to Chisholm vs. Georgia, where Chisholm won in a suit against Georgia over finances

1865, 1868, and 1870

Reconstruction Amendments (13th - 15th) - passed in the aftermath of the Civil War to address slavery, the Black Codes, as well as voting rights respectively

20th Century Amendments Pt. 1

16th Amendment - passed after Pollock vs. Farmers' Loan and Trust Co. struck down direct taxes on personal income

1913

18th Amendment - passed due to the efforts of temperance groups during the Second Great Awakening

1919

20th Amendment - better technology and transportation made it so the elected president could start their term sooner, decreasing the "lame duck" period

1933

17th Amendment - passed as a result of corruption and "electoral deadlock" as state legislatures were choosing Senators

1913

19th Amendment - passed as a result of the efforts of Suffragette groups

1920

21st Amendment - repealed the 18th, due to the increase in out-of-control crime associated with Prohibition

1933

20th Century Amendments Pt. 2

22nd Amendment - passed to limit presidents to serving two terms, after FDR served 3 terms and was elected to a fourth

1951

24th Amendment - passed to eliminate the poll taxes that were used to keep black Americans from voting

1961

1964

26th Amendment - was passed because of pushback from 18-year-olds being drafted to fight in Vietnam. They had no say in their country's leaders, yet they were being sent off to war by these leaders.

1971

23rd Amendment - was passed due to the association of voting rights with the civil rights movement. Citizens of Washington D.C. capitalized on support for civil rights in order to push for the amendment.

25th Amendment - passed to officially confirm the order of succession, particularly after the Kennedy Assassination

1967

The Unique History of the 27th Amendment

- In 1982, Gregory Watson wrote a term paper arguing the “compensation amendment” could still legally be ratified
- The amendment was introduced by James Madison in the first session of Congress, but was never ratified
- Watson received a C- for the paper, prompting him to send letters to members of Congress, advocating for ratification
- This was in the wake of several Congressional pay raises during the 1980’s
- He got his first response in 1983, and the amendment was ratified in 1992, over 200 years after its proposal
- Watson’s term paper grade was changed to an A+ in 2017



Gregory Watson holding the record of his new term paper grade

Bibliography

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