Celebrating Constitution Day!

234 years ago today, on September 17, 1787, thirty-nine men came together for the final meeting of the Constitutional Convention to sign our Constitution. Some were born in the U.S., while others were naturalized citizens. None knew whether their work would lead to a "more perfect union" or a failed experiment in a form of government the world had not previously seen.

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The Constitution is a document filled with compromises born out of passionate debate about what our country was and what is should be. The ideals that emerged; representative democracy, federalism, limited government, were new and even revolutionary. The U.S. would not have a ruling monarch, but instead a president, elected by an exclusive group of U.S. citizens. The president's term and authority would be limited.

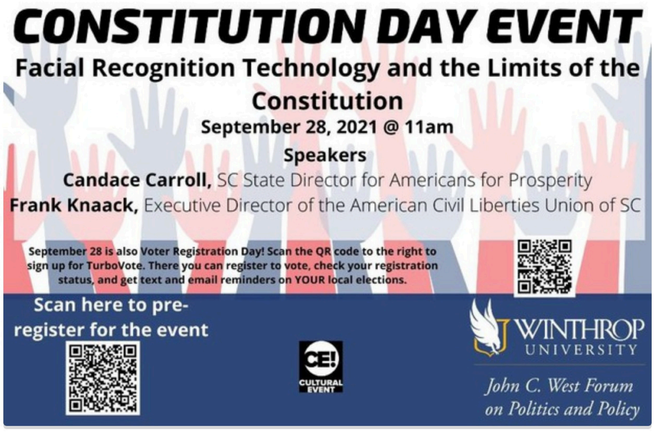
The legislative branch would be the most powerful. They were to hold the power of the purse, war-making authority, confirm justices, and so much more. It would be made up of two Houses, both required to to approve any legislation put forth. One of these Houses (The U.S. House of Representatives) would be elected directly by a select group of citizens split up geographically to represent different state interests. The idea was so revolutionary that the Founders made House terms only two years, to cool the passions they were sure would boil over.

They also developed a third branch, the judiciary, that over time has developed into perhaps the most powerful of all. The Supreme Court has become the final arbiter on questions of Constitutionality, but also on questions about what is just and humane, and who we aspire to be as American people.

The Founders left many issues unresolved, for future generations of Americans to wrestle with and improve. They left huge swaths of the population without a voice in the government. They also knew they were fallible and therefore provided us with the mechanism of Constitutional amendments to improve what they started. The Founders laid the foundation for our governmental system, and to some extent, our way of life today.

On this Constitution Day, let us each think about our role in this grand experiment we call the United States, and what we can do to be even better Americans. And if, for you, this includes becoming a better informed citizen, then please read on about our upcoming event, as well as a tool to keep you up-to-date on elections!

Sincerely,
Katarina Moyon
Director, John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy



Sign up for the Constitution Day event!

Are you trying to figure out how to register to vote? Are you worried you will miss an election? Sign up with the Winthrop community for TurboVote to get personalized information regarding voter registration and elections. This non-partisan service can help you learn when and where to vote. Never miss another election!

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Thanks for reading and for your continued support of the West Forum!

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