

What is the Social Compact in the United States?

How do you know?

The U.S. Constitution



Constitution Writing: An Act of Intent

- The Framers had to agree on the rules governing the political system and the rights of citizens.
- In writing the Constitution, the Framers intended it to:
 - Be the supreme law
 - Limit the powers of government
 - Ensure the rule of law
 - Protect popular sovereignty
- Because people have inalienable/natural rights, the Framers only delegate certain powers to the government.

Historical Context

First Draft: Distributed to Constitutional Convention delegates in August 1787

WE the People of the States
of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts,
Rhode-Island and Providence Plan-
tations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Penn-
sylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Caro-
lina, South-Carolina, and Georgia, do ordain, declare
and establish the following Constitution for the Govern-
ment of Ourselves and our Posterity.

Preamble to the Constitution

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Preamble to the Constitution

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Historical Context of “We the People”

At the time the Constitution was drafted, not all people were included in this meaning.

- Enslaved people
- Native Americans
- Women

Reflection: How does this compare to what you wrote in your We the People journal?

SIX GOALS OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. form a more perfect union
2. establish Justice
3. insure domestic Tranquility
4. provide for the common defense
5. promote the general welfare
6. secure the Blessings of Liberty for ourselves and our posterity

To Form a More Perfect Union...

Why do you think this was the first goal or purpose?

What might this have to do with the problems under the Articles of Confederation?

To Form a More Perfect Union

Historical Context:

- The delegates met to revise the Articles of Confederation
- Problems under the Articles

Role of Perspective:

- Would the problems experienced under the Articles have convinced you to change our system of government? Why or why not?
- Why does perspective matter?

Establish Justice

Historical Context:

- Justice was on the minds of the delegates since prior to declaring independence.
- The Declaration of Independence listed injustices committed against the colonists
- The Framers wanted to establish a government that was fair and respected and defended people's natural rights.



Establish Justice

Our notions of what is just has called into question previous laws and practices.

- Examples include slavery, women's rights, land usage, immigration, gay rights, use of military or police force, etc.

Respond in Writing:

- Why might people agree about the idea of justice, but disagree when applied to a particular situation?

Insure Domestic Tranquility



Peace for people within the country and among the states

Example: Disputes between states or groups within the United States which may interfere with trade or disrupt the general harmony of society.

Insure Domestic Tranquility

Thinking Historically

1. Why would this have been a concern of the Framers?
2. What historical examples of disruption to trade or society in general have we studied?

Threats to Domestic Tranquility: Contemporary (Modern-day) Examples



Provide for the Common Defense

- Includes both internal and external threats
- Essential to the survival of our nation



Some argue that the government should also be protecting against environmental threats that can affect our way of life or our very survival.

Provide for the Common Defense

Historical Context

Why might this have been important to the Framers?



Provide for the Common Defense

Think About it!

- Why is military service so important to the nation?
- If it is so important, why is it voluntary and not mandatory?
- Should some service to the country be required?



Promote the General Welfare



What is it?

- concern of the government for the health, peace, morality, and safety of its citizens;
- not to favor certain groups over others

Why was this on the minds of the Framers?



Historical Context of the General Welfare



The **Declaration of Independence** stated that the British King:

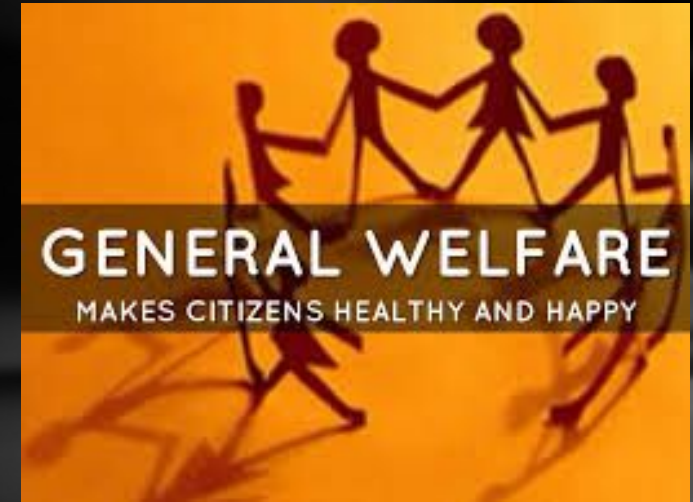
"had refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the **public good**"

"**Art. III.** The said states. . . enter into a firm league of friendship . . .for their mutual and **general welfare**, binding themselves to assist each other, against ... attacks made upon them...."



"**Art. VIII.** All charges of war, and all other expenses which shall be incurred for the common defense and **general welfare** ... shall be defrayed out of a common treasury...."

Examples of General Welfare



Reflecting on the General Welfare

“If Congress can do whatever in their discretion can be done by money, and will promote the general welfare, the government is no longer a limited one possessing enumerated (limited) powers, but an indefinite one subject to particular exceptions.”

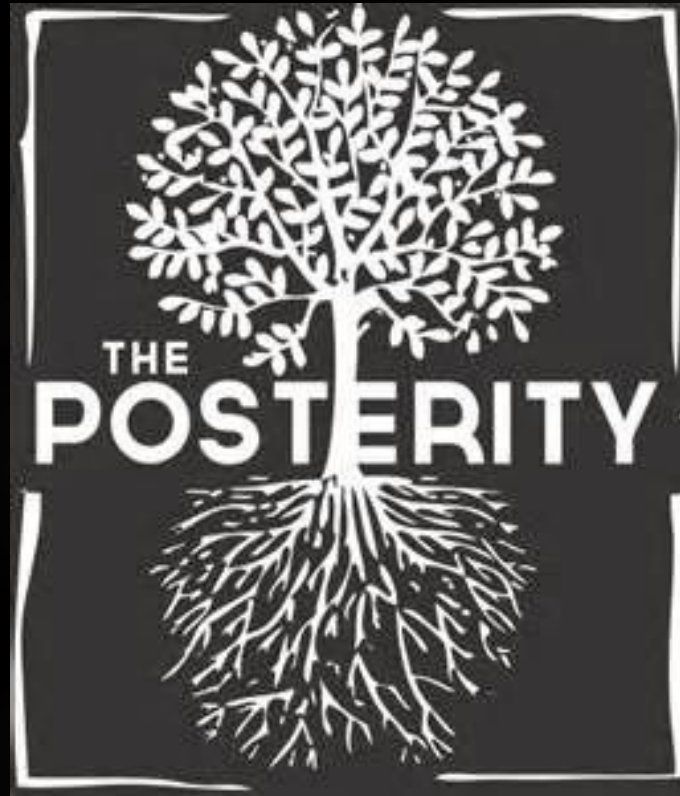
JAMES MADISON

**“FATHER
OF THE
CONSTITUTION”
AND
FOURTH
U.S. PRESIDENT**



QUESTION: How does Madison’s quote explain why people disagree about what constitutes the general welfare?

secure the Blessings of **Liberty** to
ourselves and our Posterity



What does this mean?

secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity

Discussion Questions

1. For whom were the Framers trying to secure the blessings of liberty?
2. Why do you think the Framers included their “posterity” in the Preamble?

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish **Justice**, insure **domestic Tranquility**, provide for the **common defense**, promote the **general Welfare**, and secure the Blessings of **Liberty** to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.



Which is MOST important to you?

(choose only one)

1. Justice

2. Security/Safety

3. Providing for the General Welfare

4. Freedom (for us)

5. Freedom (for future generations)

Which is LEAST important to you?

(choose only one)

1. Justice

2. Security/Safety

3. Providing for the General Welfare

4. Freedom (for us)

5. Freedom (for future generations)

Tensions among our Values

1. Freedom v. Providing for the Common Good
2. Our Freedom v. Freedom of Future Generations
3. Freedom v. Security
4. Justice = Equal Opportunity v. Competition and Individual Effort

When addressing public issues,
differences in positions are due to the
weight we -- as individuals -- place on
particular values over others....

But.... they are all American values!

Current Issues

1. Should there be more restrictive regulations on gun ownership?
2. Should we ban people from immigrating from certain countries?
3. Should we allow Nazis or White Supremacists to march in our community?
4. Should all citizens have a right to health care?
5. Should a business be able to deny service to a customer if the request conflicts with the owner's religious beliefs?