



Developed by Annette Boyd Pitts, Executive Director, The Florida Law Related Education Association Inc. Copyright 2013.

## What's Not in the Bill of Rights

### Topics addressed

- ☆ Overview of the U.S. Constitution
- ☆ The Bill of Rights
- ☆ Constitutional amendment process

**Time needed:** 40 to 50 minutes or less if modified

**Overview:** Participants will be introduced to the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the process for amending the Constitution. Participants will consider proposing a 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This is a great presentation for Constitution Week.

**Group size:** Intended for adult civic/nonpartisan groups and may be implemented in a variety of settings including dinner meetings for groups of varying sizes. While a group of 30 is ideal, this presentation can be given with much larger groups.

### Materials needed:

- ☆ **PowerPoint**
- ☆ **Chart paper**
- ☆ **Small red sticky dots (two per group)**
- ☆ **Paper for participants to write at tables**
- ☆ **Handouts (1-4)**

**Equipment:** Computer for PowerPoint, projector and screen. Contact your event coordinator. Bring web-based materials on a flash drive or have Internet access on site. Materials are available at [www.floridabar.org/judicialindependence](http://www.floridabar.org/judicialindependence).

### Preparation:

- ☆ Review presenter's guide of "What to Do and Not to Do."
- ☆ Review and become familiar with the PowerPoint and handouts so you can breeze through the slides without reading.
- ☆ Make copies of handouts for distribution.

**Getting Started:** As participants are being seated, ask them to list on the paper at their tables five rights that everyone has in this country.

**40 to 50  
minutes  
required**



**Needed:**  
Laptop and  
projector for  
PowerPoint



**Warm-up  
activity:**  
Name 5 rights  
we have in the  
United States

5 minutes



**Begin  
presentation**  
Review  
purpose for  
Constitution and  
Bill of Rights



Once the presentation begins and everyone is seated, make sure everyone in the audience has completed this warm up exercise. Show screen two of the PowerPoint and discuss generally what is included in a constitution. Expand upon the purposes of a constitution and how/why the U.S. Constitution was developed.

**The amendments:** Focus on the amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Ask how many rights are in the Bill of Rights. Appropriate answers should be the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Let participants know that although today we know the Bill of Rights as the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, there were actually 12 amendments proposed to be included in the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was later added as a compromise to ensure the U.S. Constitution would be ratified.

**Handout 1:** Without discussing the rights in the Bill of Rights yet, distribute Handout 1 and ask participants to review the 12 proposed amendments to be included in the Bill of Rights. Individually, ask participants to determine which 10 amendments were approved originally to be included in the Bill of Rights. Ask participants to work independently and place a check mark by each amendment they think is in the Bill of Rights today.

**Small group exercise:** In groups of five have participants review their responses and agree as a group on the 10 rights in the Bill of Rights. Allow five to ten minutes. While the groups are working, post chart paper with the 12 rights listed. At the conclusion of the group work, hand out two red dots per small group. When everyone has finished, each group should place their red dots on the chart paper next to the two amendments (one dot per amendment) that they believe are not included in the Bill of Rights. ***(Do not allow participants to examine the Bill of Rights before or during this activity!)***

**Handout 2:** After all groups have placed their dots on the two rights they believe are not included in the Bill of Rights, discuss with participants their decisions. Distribute pocket Constitutions (or Handout 2) and highlight the ratified/approved amendments that were included in the Bill of Rights. Highlight the two amendments that were not ratified to be in the Bill of Rights. The PowerPoint provides details on their fate.

**Amending the Constitution:** Briefly review the process for amending the U.S. Constitution. Ask if it should be easy or difficult to change the Constitution. Emphasize that the U.S. Constitution has existed for more than 220 years.

**Full group discussion:** Proceed to the Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down component of the PowerPoint. Introduce this section by telling participants that more than 10,000 proposals to amend the U.S. Constitution have been introduced since its inception. Announce each proposed amendment that appears in the PowerPoint and ask participants to consider if the proposal passed and is in the U.S. Constitution or if it failed and is not. (Note to presenter: All of the examples used failed so the correct answer would be Thumbs Down for all proposals in the PowerPoint. You can add others as well.) Let participants know that while approximately 10,000 amendments have been introduced, far less than 1 percent of them have been approved/ratified.

**Handout 1:**  
Which 10 of these 12 amendments were ratified?

Have audience answer first individually then in small groups

Highlight the 2 amendments not included using chart paper and red dots



Allow 5 minutes

**Handout 2**  
Review the first 10 ratified amendments

**Review**  
process for amending Constitution

**Thumbs up or thumbs down?**



Which of these proposed amendments did not pass?

Have full group give a thumbs up or thumbs down

**Handouts 3 and 4:** Distribute copies of the Constitution Outline (Handout 3) and Constitutional Amendment Proposal Form (Handout 4). Participants should reassemble in their original small groups and work together to review the amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

**28th Amendment:** Each small group should brainstorm ideas they think should be included in the U.S. Constitution today and develop the wording for an amendment using the form provided.

**Time for a vote:** Have participants present some of their proposals to the full group. The full group can vote to approve or reject each proposal.

Debrief with the full group.

## Handouts 3 and 4

In small groups  
review the 27  
amendments  
to the U.S.  
Constitution



Have each  
group come  
up with a  
28th  
amendment

## 28?

Debrief  
proposals



**Vote**  
Full group  
can vote to  
accept or  
reject each  
amendment



*For additional information, contact Annette Boyd Pitts, at [ABPflreaED@aol.com](mailto:ABPflreaED@aol.com). Permission is granted for Bar members to use this activity for educational presentations. Benchmark activities are available to be downloaded from The Florida Bar at [www.floridabar.org/judicialindependence](http://www.floridabar.org/judicialindependence).*