

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.

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The Preamble to the Constitution is the preliminary statement that describes the purpose of the United States Constitution. The preamble and the Constitution were written during the Confederation Congress for the Philadelphia Convention that was held May -September, 1787.

The purpose of this Convention was to save the Union of 13 states from disintegration. The states were only bound to one another by the Articles of Confederation, the document agreed upon by the 13 colonies when they declared their independence from England. The Articles of Confederation was, "a firm league of friendship." It was not a document created to govern a nation. Each state retained its government and independence, and had the power to defeat measures proposed by other states. The Union needed a Constitution that would bind the states together, create an efficient central government, and protect individual rights.

The delegates to the Convention were the leaders from each state, many of whom had served at the First Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence. The 55 delegates included George Washington, James Madison, George Mason, Alexander Hamilton, and other prominent leaders who would later serve under the Constitution they had created.

The Committee of Style wrote the preamble to the Constitution and submitted it to the Convention in September 1787. It was originally written to include a list of all the states, but was changed to "We the people of the United States" because the authors did not know which states would ratify the Constitution. The preamble summarizes the purpose of the Convention and the Constitution in one sentence. It was accepted by the delegates without comment.