

CONSTITUTION
of the
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Article

Preamble

I. Declaration of Rights

- II. The Legislature
- III. Legislation
- IV. The Executive
- V. The Judiciary
- Schedule to Judiciary Article
- VI. Public Officers
- VII. Elections
- VIII. Taxation and Finance
- IX. Local Government
- X. Private Corporations
- XI. Amendments
- Schedule No. 1 (Adopted with the Constitution)
- Schedule No. 2 (Amendments of November 2, 1909)

Constitution of 1874. The Constitution of 1874 was adopted November 3, 1873, by a Constitutional Convention which was called pursuant to the act of April 11, 1872 (P.L.53, No.42). The Constitution was ratified at a special election held December 16, 1873, and went into effect January 1, 1874. This Constitution was amended in 1901, 1909, 1911, 1913, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1922, 1923, 1928, 1933, 1937, 1943, 1945, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1961, 1963 and 1965. By statute, 1 Pa.C.S. § 906, the Constitution, as adopted by referendum of December 16, 1873, shall be known and may be cited as the Constitution of 1874.

Constitution of 1968. The Constitution of 1874 was modified and renumbered by extensive amendments on May 17, 1966, November 8, 1966, and May 16, 1967; and by proclamation of the Governor of July 7, 1967, P.L.1063, pursuant to the act of August 17, 1965 (P.L.345, No.180). Proposals 1 through 7 to amend the Constitution were recommended by a Constitutional Convention which was called pursuant to the act of March 15, 1967 (P.L.2, No.2). The proposals were approved by the electorate on April 23, 1968. By statute, 1 Pa.C.S. § 906, the Constitution, as amended by referenda of May 17, 1966, November 8, 1966, May 16, 1967, and April 23, 1968, and as numbered by proclamation of the Governor of July 7, 1967, shall be known and may be cited as the Constitution of 1968.

Section Headings. Section headings were not contained in the Constitution as adopted by referendum of December 16, 1873, but were either added by various constitutional amendments or promulgated on June 11, 1974, P.L.1573, by the Director of the Legislative Reference Bureau with the approval of the Attorney General under statutory authority contained in 1 Pa.C.S. § 905.

Explanation of Amendment Notes. Unless otherwise noted, amendments are referred to by date of adoption by the electorate together with a reference to the applicable joint resolution (J.R.) or, in rare cases, concurrent resolution (C.R.) adopted by the General Assembly and the page in the Laws of Pennsylvania (P.L.) in which the joint resolution or concurrent resolution was published.

PREAMBLE

WE, the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

Sec.

1. Inherent rights of mankind.
2. Political powers.
3. Religious freedom.
4. Religion.
5. Elections.
6. Trial by jury.
7. Freedom of press and speech; libels.
8. Security from searches and seizures.
9. Rights of accused in criminal prosecutions.
10. Initiation of criminal proceedings; twice in jeopardy; eminent domain.
11. Courts to be open; suits against the Commonwealth.
12. Power of suspending laws.
13. Bail, fines and punishments.
14. Prisoners to be bailable; habeas corpus.
15. Special criminal tribunals.
16. Insolvent debtors.
17. Ex post facto laws; impairment of contracts.
18. Attainder.
19. Attainder limited.
20. Right of petition.
21. Right to bear arms.

22. Standing army; military subordinate to civil power.
23. Quartering of troops.
24. Titles and offices.
25. Reservation of powers in people.
26. No discrimination by Commonwealth and its political subdivisions.
27. Natural resources and the public estate.
28. Prohibition against denial or abridgment of equality of rights because of sex.

Adoption. Unless otherwise noted, the provisions of Article I were adopted December 16, 1873, 1874 P.L.3, effective January 1, 1874.

That the general, great and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and unalterably established, WE DECLARE THAT—

§ 27. Natural resources and the public estate.

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

(May 18, 1971, P.L.769, J.R.3)

1971 Amendment. Joint Resolution No.3 added section 27.