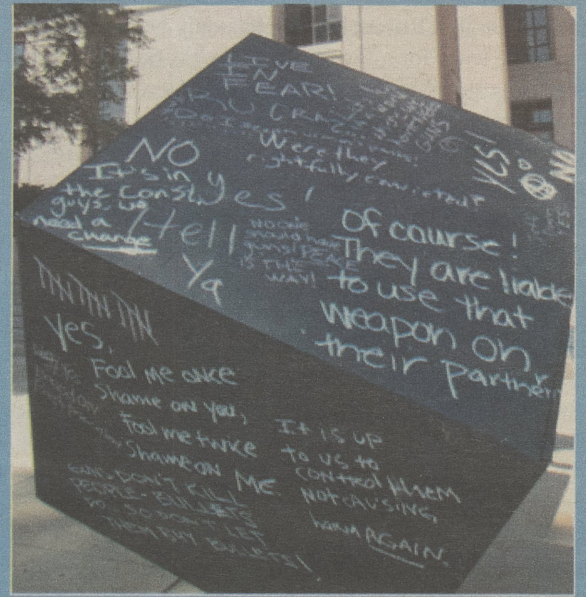


We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
 September 17, 1787, Independence Hall, Philadelphia

Penn State Brandywine cordially invites you to look for the blocks, exercise your right to free speech and participate in



**United States
 Constitution Day 2010
 Penn State University
 Writer's Blocks
 Friday, September 17, 2010**

The Constitution and Religious Tolerance

The colonial and revolutionary history of the United States is steeped in examples of both religious tolerance and deep schisms and sometimes violence among those whose fundamental beliefs differed. The First Amendment's freedom of religion clauses were drawn on pragmatic, as well as philosophical understandings. Thomas Jefferson called for a "wall of separation" between the state and religion. Today, some people want the government to prohibit the construction of an Islamic mosque and community center two blocks from what they see as ground hallowed by the 9/11 tragedy. Others cite the Constitution's deference to the free exercise of religion as among the nation's most cherished values.

What does the Constitution say?

Amendment I begins, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

How do you respond?

Is intolerance of the 9/11 mosque fundamentally un-American?

The Constitution & Firearms

The scope and meaning of the Second Amendment - "the right to bear arms" - continues to divide public sentiment and judicial interpretation. Some view gun ownership as a personal right necessary to sustaining the democracy the Constitution is built upon. Others believe that the widespread presence of guns is an affront to the very notion of a constitution intended to "secure the Blessings of Liberty." Supreme Court decisions provide guidance, yet recent cases have ended in bare majorities of 5 to 4. Is the right to carry a gun a settled issue? Does the Constitution require legislators and the judiciary to balance the Second Amendment against other rights? When so many disagree, do citizens lose faith in democracy's common ground?

What does the Constitution say?

Amendment II states: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

How do you respond?

Can the right to carry a gun be balanced with public safety?