



Constitutional Principles and Structures: SS.7.CG.3.5
The Amendment Process
READING #4

Name: _____

Date: _____



SS.7.CG.3.5 Benchmark Clarification 4: Students will recognize the significance of the difficulty of amending the U.S. Constitution.

Article V (5) of the United States Constitution describes the two methods for **proposing** amendments and the two methods for **ratifying amendments** to the Constitution. The Founding Fathers wanted to be sure that there was a process for the Constitution to be a “living document” that could change with the times.

The Founding Fathers meant to create a difficult. If the process were too simple, the Constitution could change far more often than it should. If the process were too complicated, the Constitution would be stuck in 1787, when it was written.

The large percentage of votes needed to ratify amendments shows the difficulty of amending the U.S. Constitution. Two-thirds (2/3) of each house of Congress or the state legislatures is required to propose an amendment, which means that only elected officials may vote to propose an amendment. Also, getting a supermajority (more than 50% plus one) of elected officials to agree to propose an amendment shows the difficulty of proposing amendments.

Three-fourths (3/4) of the state legislatures must vote to ratify an amendment, or three-fourths (3/4) of the states join in a ratifying convention to vote to ratify an amendment. Either way, like proposing an amendment, ratifying an amendment requires a supermajority of elected officials (or people chosen by elected officials).

Elected officials know that the media, individuals and interest groups monitor them when they vote on proposing and ratifying amendments.

Remember, once an amendment is added to the Constitution, it becomes a part of it. No federal or state law can go against that amendment because it is the Constitution.

amendment - a change to a constitution (e.g., U.S. Constitution, Florida Constitution)

propose - to make a suggestion

ratify - to confirm by expressing consent; formally approve