

Script for the Video

“We the People”

Hello, my name is Milton Mack. I am the State Court Administrator for the State of Michigan, and I work for the Michigan Supreme Court, the head of the judicial branch of the State of Michigan. Previously, I was a probate judge.

In celebration of Constitution Day, I would like to talk to you about the Preamble, the beginning words of our Constitution, which is our plan for government and our highest law. The Preamble explains not just why we need government, but why we need good government.

The first three words of the Preamble – “We the People” – are the most important. Why did the framers, the people who wrote the Constitution, use the words “We the People?” They wrote and revised their words over and over again, so it was not by accident. The framers wanted everyone to know that the power of the Constitution comes from “We the People.” A good government gets its power from the people, not the will of a king or a tyrant. And that law applies equally to all. It is what we call the rule of law.

As subjects of the British king, Americans only had the rights that the king would allow them to have. Without the rule of law, many were jailed, lost their property, or were even executed without a trial. The founders realized that freedom could only be protected if our country had a limited government and a rule of law that applied equally to everyone.

The framers also wanted to form a united nation that worked together, rather than as a group of separate states. For the Constitution to be effective, it had to be accepted by “We the People.” Ordinary Americans debated what they liked and disliked about the Constitution before elected delegates voted to ratify and accept it. Only after nine of the 13 states had ratified the Constitution did it become the supreme law of the land.

The Constitution made rules not only for how the federal government should work but also saved certain rights and responsibilities for the states. When Michigan became a state in 1837, the state constitution began with “We, the PEOPLE.”

So what do the U.S. and Michigan Constitutions mean to you and your classmates? They give the U.S. and Michigan governments the power to make, enforce, and

interpret laws – not just for adults, but for everyone. Attending school, speaking and writing freely, and the right to freedom of religion are among the liberties we all enjoy.

Even though we celebrate Constitution Day on September 17 – the date the Constitution was signed in 1787, it is important that “We the People” – Americans of all ages – remember every day as “Constitution Day.”

So good luck with your studies!