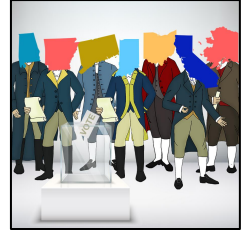


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Civic Duties and Responsibilities

Have you ever wondered why the Pledge of Allegiance has the words "...and to the Republic for which it stands.."? Why would the word republic be used? The Framers that worked on writing the U.S. Constitution wanted to make sure that the form of government they set up had a balance between government power and citizens' rights. The form of government they established is called a constitutional republic. In this form of government, people vote democratically for individuals to represent their interests in government. However, a written constitution ensures the government has limited power and the rights of citizens are protected. The first three words of the Preamble to the Constitution are "We the People." Included with the power given to the people in this form of government are several civic duties and responsibilities that are vital to the preservation of the United States' constitutional republic.

What is a constitutional republic?



Civic Duties



There are several things that a citizen is obligated to do to preserve the constitutional republic. These "must do" requirements are called civic duties. Some of these duties include: obeying the law, serving on juries, paying taxes, and registering for the selective military service. Let's take a closer look at some of these civic duties!



Obeying the law is something everyone must do. Congress makes laws that are needed to protect the rights of the citizens. Another duty, serving on a jury, allows citizens to have a trial where a jury of their peers helps decide the outcome. This is a right listed in the Bill of Rights. Your parents may have received a jury duty notice in the mail!



An important but sometimes unliked civic duty is paying taxes. Since the government is not a company, it needs to have a way to pay for services and employees, as well as money to complete projects like maintaining roads. This is done by collecting taxes. Lastly, some citizens have the duty to sign up for the selective service. Males at the age of 18 have to register for the military draft in case the country needs more soldiers.

List some examples of civic duties:

List some examples of civic responsibilities:

Civic Responsibilities

Civic responsibilities are things that a citizen should do. These are things like informed voting, paying attention to public issues, attending civic meetings, volunteering, and running for office. Unlike civic duties, you cannot get in trouble with the law if you do not participate in civic responsibilities. However, our government and society would not work if citizens failed to do these things! A responsible citizen is one who pays attention to the public issues that affect them daily. They attend civic meetings, research candidates and voting issues, and run for elected offices. Responsible citizens also find ways to help their community by volunteering.



What would happen to the constitutional republic if citizens did not fulfill these civic duties and responsibilities?