

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

PREAMBLE.

The People of Connecticut acknowledging with gratitude, the good providence of God, in having permitted them to enjoy a free government; do, in order more effectually to define, secure, and perpetuate the liberties, rights and privileges which they have derived from their ancestors; hereby, after a careful consideration and revision, ordain and establish the following constitution and form of civil government.

ARTICLE FIRST. DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

That the great and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established,

WE DECLARE:

SEC. 1. All men when they form a social compact, are equal in rights; and no man or set of men are entitled to exclusive public emoluments or privileges from the community.

SEC. 2. All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit; and they have at all times an undeniable and indefeasible right to alter their form of government in such manner as they may think expedient.

SEC. 3. The exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination, shall forever be free to all persons in the state; provided, that the right hereby declared and established, shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or to justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the state.

SEC. 4. Every citizen may freely speak, write and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.

SEC. 5. No law shall ever be passed to curtail or restrain the liberty of speech or of the press.

SEC. 6. In all prosecutions or indictments for libels, the truth may be given in evidence, and the jury shall have the right to determine the law and the facts, under the direction of the court.

SEC. 7. The people shall be secure in their persons, houses, papers and possessions from unreasonable searches or seizures; and no warrant to search any place, or to seize any person or things, shall issue without describing them as nearly as may be, nor without probable cause supported by oath or affirmation.

SEC. 8. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall have a right to be heard by himself and by counsel; to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted by the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process to obtain witnesses in his behalf; to be released on bail upon sufficient security, except in capital offenses, where the proof is evident or the presumption great; and in all prosecutions by indictment or information, to a speedy, public trial by an impartial jury. No person shall be compelled to give evidence against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor shall excessive bail be required nor excessive fines imposed. No person shall be held to answer for any

crime, punishable by death or life imprisonment, unless on a presentment or an indictment of a grand jury, except in the armed forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger.

(Sec. 8 amended in 1982. See Art. XVII of Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.)

SEC. 9. No person shall be arrested, detained or punished, except in cases clearly warranted by law.

SEC. 10. All courts shall be open, and every person, for an injury done to him in his person, property or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice administered without sale, denial or delay.

SEC. 11. The property of no person shall be taken for public use, without just compensation therefor.

SEC. 12. The privileges of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended, unless, when in case of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it; nor in any case, but by the legislature.

SEC. 13. No person shall be attainted of treason or felony, by the legislature.

SEC. 14. The citizens have a right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble for their common good, and to apply to those invested with the powers of government, for redress of grievances, or other proper purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance.

SEC. 15. Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state.

SEC. 16. The military shall, in all cases, and at all times, be in strict subordination to the civil power.

SEC. 17. No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner; nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

SEC. 18. No hereditary emoluments, privileges or honors, shall ever be granted, or conferred in this state.

SEC. 19. The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate.

(Sec. 19 amended in 1972. See [Art. IV of Amendments](#) to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.)

SEC. 20. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to segregation or discrimination in the exercise or enjoyment of his civil or political rights because of religion, race, color, ancestry or national origin.

(Sec. 20 amended in 1974. See Art. V of Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.)

(Sec. 20 amended in 1984. See Art. XXI of the Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.)

Select Amendments

ARTICLE IV.

[Section 19 of article first](#) of the constitution is amended to read as follows: The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate, the number of such jurors, which shall not be less than six, to be established by law; but no person shall, for a capital offense, be tried by a jury of less than twelve jurors without his consent. In all civil and criminal actions tried by a jury, the parties shall have the right to challenge jurors peremptorily, the number of such challenges to be established by law. The right to question each juror individually by counsel shall be inviolate.

Adopted December 22, 1972.

ARTICLE V.

[Section 20 of article first](#) of the constitution is amended to read as follows: No person shall be denied the equal protection of the law nor be subjected to segregation or discrimination in the exercise or enjoyment of his or her civil or political rights because of religion, race, color, ancestry, national origin or sex.

Adopted November 27, 1974.

(Amended in 1984. See Art. [XXI of the Amendments](#) to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut.)

ARTICLE XI.

Article fifth of the constitution is amended by adding a new section to read as follows:

SEC. 7. In addition to removal by impeachment and removal by the governor on the address of two-thirds of each house of the general assembly, judges of all courts, except those courts to which judges are elected, may, in such manner as shall by law be prescribed, be removed or suspended by the supreme court. The general assembly may establish a judicial review council which may also, in such manner as shall by law be prescribed, censure any such judge or suspend any such judge for a definite period not longer than one year.

Adopted November 24, 1976.

ARTICLE XVII.

Section 8 of the article first of the constitution is amended to read as follows: In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall have a right to be heard by himself and by counsel; to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted by the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process to obtain witnesses in his behalf; to be released on bail upon sufficient security, except in capital offenses, where the proof is evident or the presumption great; and in all prosecutions by information, to a speedy, public trial by an impartial jury. No person shall be compelled to give evidence against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor shall excessive bail be required nor excessive fines imposed. No person shall be held to answer for any crime, punishable by death or life imprisonment, unless upon probable cause shown at a hearing in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, except in the armed forces, or in the militia when in actual service in time of war or public danger.

Adopted November 24, 1982.