

## THE JUDICIAL BRANCH AND ARTICLES IV-VII

### *Amending the Constitution*

(See Article V)

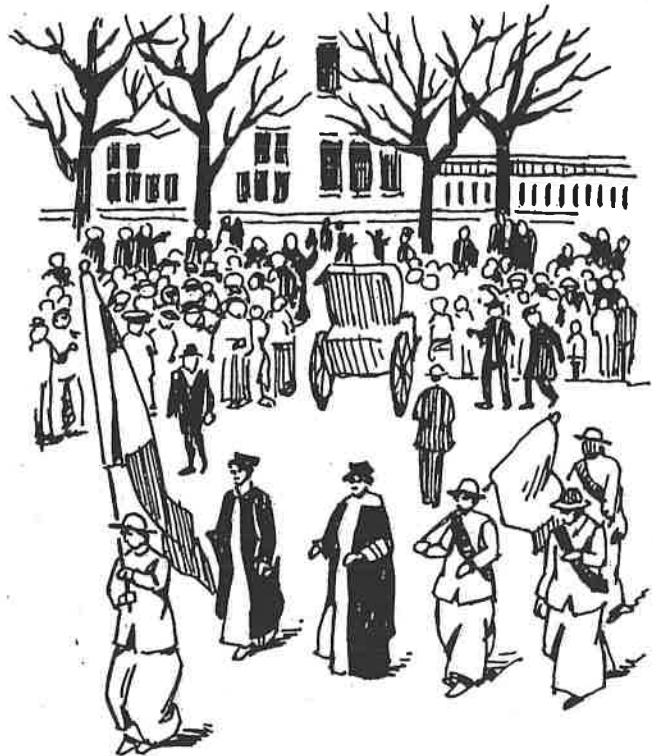
When the founding fathers were writing the Constitution in 1787, they were thinking far into the future. If the Constitution was to become a lasting part of American government, there would have to be room for change. Article V is perhaps the most important part of the Constitution.

Article V provides a way for the Constitution to be *amended*, or changed. The process by which the Constitution can be changed is not an easy one. There are many steps that must be gone through. By making the process a difficult one, the framers hoped to avoid changing the Constitution too quickly. Any change that would be made must be a good one.

There are two ways to propose an amendment to the Constitution. For example, let's say we wish to lower the age requirement to be President from 35 to 30. One way to start the amendment would be to get two thirds of both houses of Congress (House and Senate) to agree. The other way to propose an amendment is through a constitutional convention called by two thirds of the state legislatures.

If our amendment was approved by either of the two above groups, then the amendment must be *ratified*, or formally approved. There are two ways to ratify an amendment: three fourths of the legislatures in the states must ratify any amendment, or three fourths of the states must have individual constitutional conventions to ratify the amendment.

Throughout the past 200-plus years, there have only been 27 changes to the structure of the Constitution. Our founding fathers established a system that was basically sound and problem free. While there are, of course, errors, the United States Constitution is the oldest written constitution in the world. Our Constitution has been the example that many other countries of the world have used to formulate their own governments. We can be proud of that!



Parades were held to encourage the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted suffrage to women.