

The Bicentennial of the United States Constitution - 1987

Issue

- 1) As successful a governing document as the United States Constitution has been, it is today under assault by those who seek to reverse or limit its interpretation by the Supreme Court; to amend the Constitution by convening a Constitutional Convention to achieve a balanced budget; and to undermine the Constitution by the abuse of power or flouting the Constitution as they ignore the system of checks and balances and defy the principle of separation of powers.
- 2) The failure of all eligible voters from every segment of society to register and vote is a serious threat to both the Constitution and the future of this democracy.

Background

The celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution on September 17, 1987, reminds all Americans of the fundamental greatness and significance of the oldest, still governing, single document Constitution in the world and has provided a rare opportunity to study the importance, historical significance and contemporary role of this document in preserving American Democracy.

The survival of the Constitution is testimony to the wisdom and skill of the Founding Fathers who through compromise and consensus created a durable union in which "We the People" granted the states certain rights. Their labors produced a political system which safeguards individual freedom at the same time that it maintains a federal republic capable of providing security and controlled by a series of checks and balances as well as separation of power.

Over these 200 years, millions of men, women and children living under oppressive regimes have flocked to these shores attracted by the personal and political liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. These men and women helped to build this great nation. The Constitution and its amendments, including the Bill of Rights, have evolved slowly during the past 200 years to become the guardian of the rights and freedoms which we in the United States hold dear.

Resolution

The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods:

- 1) Urges its United States members to work in coalition with other community groups and organizations to facilitate voter registration and voter education in all communities that will result in fuller participation in the electoral process;
- 2) Reaffirms our long-standing opposition to the constitutional convention for any reason because we believe that the potentially unlimited power of such a convention threatens our constitutionally guaranteed rights and our democratic institutions as well as the Constitution itself;
- 3) Joins with all Americans in celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the United States Constitution and asks that our members in the United States rededicate themselves to safeguarding the democratic values of the Constitution and working to bring about liberty and justice for all.