

DALLAS, Sept. 11, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The following op-ed is being released by the ABOTA Foundation in honor of Constitution Day 2013 on September 17, 2013:

*We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

These are the opening words of the U.S. Constitution, the incredible document that binds us together as a nation and defines what it means to be an American. As we celebrate the anniversary of this enduring document of self-governance, signed on September 17, 1787, it is a good time to reflect on its significance 226 years ago and today.

Fifty-five men gathered in Philadelphia in May 1787 to rewrite the Articles of Confederation, the loose governing agreement among the 13 new United States of America. Although all were white and most were well-educated men of means, they were also a diverse group. They came from large states and small states, from northern business firms and southern slave-holding plantations. All agreed that the Articles of Confederation were not working. They were believers in the new republic but they had differing views on what kind of government would endure in America.

Debate was heated over representation in Congress, the enumeration of powers between the branches of the federal government and the states, the independence of the judiciary, and the question of slavery. The Constitution created an entirely new form of government and was a masterpiece of compromise. It has endured for 226 years with only 25 amendments

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Written by Australian Business

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(Prohibition was ratified and repealed) and has been the glue that holds this large and diverse nation together.

Sadly, many young Americans know little about the Constitution, the government it created or the laws that govern their daily lives. And, what young people don't understand, they do not value or work to protect. Young people don't trust the political process they see in the media and have little knowledge of how to effect change. So, they simply don't get involved.

The American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) and its Foundation are committed to returning meaningful civic education to America's schools. In partnership with other civic education organizations, the ABOTA Foundation is reaching out to interested teachers, district and state school administrators, legislators, governors, and civic organizations to create a groundswell of political will that will require schools to re-engage our children in learning the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Every school day is filled with important lessons for our children's future – reading, math, science and technology. As we celebrate Constitution Day 2013, let us remember that civic education is critical to their future, too – and to the future of our nation.

Freedom is never free, and we must earn our citizenship every day. The future of "We the People" depends on it.

*William H. Sieben is the president of the Foundation of the American Board of Trial Advocates, a professional organization of more than 7,000 civil trial attorneys representing both plaintiff and defense. Information on ABOTA's civic education initiatives can be found at [www.abota.org](http://www.abota.org)*

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