

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

★ This provision marks the only place in the main text of the Constitution that refers to religion. In the 18th century religious tests were common in England, designed to exclude from office anyone—chiefly Roman Catholics and non-conforming Protestants—who was not a member of the Church of England. Some states, including Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, also had state constitutional provisions requiring of officials a belief in God or the Christian faith. The framers sought here to bar any such requirements for federal office holders.

ARTICLE VII

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

★ The Articles of Confederation could be amended only by the unanimous consent of all 13 states. But the framers had done more than amend the Articles; they had entirely discarded them. Requiring no more than nine states to ratify the Constitution made it far more likely that the new charter would go into effect. By putting the question of ratification before newly elected "conventions" the framers also sought to bypass state legislators who might be wary of any new government framework that could dilute their power. The conventions would also emphasize that the Constitution was a compact among the American people, not merely among the states.