

Voice the Constitution[©]

Definitions

Affirmation vs. Oath: An oath is a solemn declaration made by calling upon something or someone that the oath maker considers sacred, most often a deity. An affirmation is a solemn declaration made without reference to a sacred figure. Either is offered as an option to individual oath-takers by the Constitution. Their force in law is identical.

Bill of attainder: a legislative act declaring a group or individual guilty of some crime without benefit of trial.

Capitation: also known as a Poll Tax, a capitation is a per-person tax levied without regard to income.

Corruption of Blood: This refers to the common practice of the time wherein the family of an individual convicted of a serious crime (most often treason) would also be tainted, carrying the guilt of the relative collectively for several generations.

Duty of tonnage: a fee imposed upon a vessel for entering, remaining in, or exiting from a port. It essentially purchases the right to do business in a port.

Emolument: from Middle English meaning gift or profit. Depending on context, emolument generally means "bribe" or "inducement."

Ex post facto law: a retroactive law that changes the consequences of an act already committed

Habeas Corpus: Meaning literally "[We command] that you have the body," this Latin term is commonly interpreted to mean "produce the individual." It was established in the Magna Carta in 1215 and requires that a person taken into custody must be informed of the reason for his internment and must have access to legal counsel. It is the attorney who will approach the court and demand, "produce my client," at which point the prisoner must be provided.

Impost: a customs duty.

Letter of Marque and Reprisal: an authorization allowing a private party to raid and capture the assets (often merchant ships) of an enemy nation.

Republican form of government: In the Constitution this phrase refers to a representative Democracy (a Republic). It does not refer to the Republican party which was not founded until 1854.

Videlicet: (usually abbreviated *viz.*) introduces the Bill of Rights. In this case it means "specifically."