

The central theme that runs through the Constitution, to me, is more of a phrase. The phrase is, "Citizens desire to be free and equal; this is obtained through the ballot box". Why do I state a phrase instead of a theme?

We commonly only study the Bill of Rights and the Reconstruction Amendments. However, there are twenty-seven amendments (in total) in our Constitution. Amendments fifteen through twenty-seven clearly demonstrate the will of our citizens to be free and to affect such through the ballot box.

The Bill of Right and the Reconstruction Amendments are the enumerated list of rights that all citizens enjoy (as a base, and only after the Fourteenth Amendment vested *certain* federal rights to the states).

The Amendments that exemplify 'citizens desire to be free and equal' is primarily found in the Nineteenth Amendment (Woman's Suffrage) and the Twenty-First Amendment (repealing Prohibition). It is interesting that the Nineteenth Amendment was not enacted until 1920; women's voting rights had been a social issue for the previous 100 years! The Twenty-First Amendment repealed Prohibition. Yes, Prohibition concerned alcohol, yet the will of our citizens to control their own bodies and makes their own decisions is what led to the social upheaval that eventually enacted the Twenty-First Amendment.

The Amendments that exemplify a citizen's desire to be free through the ballot box is exemplified in the Fifteenth (prohibits the denial of suffrage based upon previous servitude), Seventeenth (allows senators to be directly elected), Twenty-Fourth (prohibits the revocation of voting rights due to the non-payment of poll taxes), and Twenty-Sixth Amendment (establishing eighteen as the national voting age). These Amendments specifically guaranteed that any citizen could vote directly for their candidate of choice in elections.