



As Nation Celebrates Constitution Day . . .

But Many See Need for Improvements

By George Gallup, Jr.

PRINCETON, N.J. — The celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Constitution comes at a time when a majority of Americans believe the document to be basically sound and, at the same time, overwhelmingly endorse the key "separation of powers" provision.

while 42% of those under 30 concur. Whites (55%) are substantially more likely than non-whites (36%) to feel the Constitution is basically sound. Public opinion on the other questions is less affected by demographic background.

Constitution is in need of some basic changes or amend-

Some people say that splitting the power of govern-

changes.

of government from becoming too powerful. Others say such checks and balances are a bad idea because they get in the way of efficient government. Which comes closer to your view?

Amending the Constitution

Article V of the Constitution provides two mechanisms for amendments. The first requires a proposed

least three-fourths of the states. A second requires Congress to call a constitutional convention when requested by two-thirds of the states. Any changes passed by such

Bad idea	19
No opinion	8
	<hr/>
	100%

gress, the prospect for the first constitutional convention

or do you think such a convention might make too many

ings:

Do you believe that after 200 years the Constitution is still basically sound and meets the needs of our country, or do you think the Constitution is in need of some basic changes or amendments?

Constitutional Convention

Needed to make changes	21%
Might makes things worse	72
No opinion	7
	<hr/>
	100%

Current Validity of Constitution

Still meets nation's needs	53%
Needs basic changes	44
No opinion	3
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	100%

The findings are based on telephone interviews with 812 adults, 18 and older, conducted for NEWSWEEK by The Gallup Organization in selected localities across the nation during May 6-7. For results based on samples of this size, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling and other random effects should not exceed 4 percentage points in either direction.

Assessments of whether or not the Constitution is still able to meet the country's needs vary significantly by education, age and race. About seven college

In addition to sampling error, the reader should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias

30 and older, 56% feel the Constitution is still sound,