**REGENTS REVIEW – CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

**13th Amendment** – Ratified almost immediately after the end of the [Civil War](http://www.civilwar.com/), this abolished slavery in the United States, removing [America’s original sin](http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/index.php) and fundamentally changing the nation’s character. Without this, the United States would have lacked the moral gravitas to act as a force for civil rights around the world.

**14th Amendment** – Makes the citizenship of former slaves part of the constitution, removing any potential legal challenges or [clever legislative devices](http://ipoaa.com/black_codes_louisians_miss_ohio.htm) to deny the benefits of freedom to those formerly held as slaves. This amendment was largely a reaction to the attempts of Southern states to so restrict the movements and activities of African-Americans as to return them to something very much like slavery.

**15th Amendment** – Makes it unconstitutional to [restrict voting based on race](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h426.html). Another Reconstruction amendment codifying the rights of former slaves.

**16th Amendment** – Allows a [federal income tax](http://www.irs.gov/). We may hate it, but this is how the massive machine that is our government gets paid for.

**17th Amendment** – United States Senators used to be selected by [state legislatures](http://www.ncsl.org/). This amendment elects them by a direct vote of the people.

**18th Amendment** – (Prohibition of alcohol) This amendment tried to legislate morality and failed, giving rise to an era of [speakeasies](http://www.legendsofamerica.com/ah-prohibitionspeakeasy.html), gangsters and [classic movies about speakeasies and gangsters](http://thepulplist.com.s48469.gridserver.com/2009/05/top-20-gangster-movies-of-the-last-40-years/). The 21st Amendment repealed it.

**19th Amendment** – Makes it unconstitutional to restrict voting based on gender. [Giving women the right](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/suffrage/) to vote took until 1920 – fifty years after African-Americans got the vote.

**21st Amendment** – repeals the 18th amendment ([prohibition of alcohol](http://history1900s.about.com/od/1920s/p/prohibition.htm)), ending the [gangster era](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/prohibition_and_the_gangsters.htm) and bringing drunkards out of closet.

**22nd Amendment**- Ratified in 1951 as a response to [Franklin Roosevelt](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/franklindroosevelt) being elected four times, this amendment restricts the President to two terms of office.

**24th Amendment** – Another voting rights act, this time making it unconstitutional to compel voters to pay a tax in order to vote. These “[poll taxes](http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h425.html)” were applied to Southern blacks as a way to discourage their voting.