law. The United States Constitution provides two methods of proposing and ratifying a amendment, both of which allow the interests of the national and the state government to be taken into consideration equally.

The first step in amending the Constitution is to have the amendment proposed by one of two possible ways. An amendment can be proposed by a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress, or by a National Constitutional Convention called by Congress, on a petition from the legislatures of two-thirds of the states. All amendments proposed thus far have originated from Congress.

The second step is getting the proposed amendment ratified. The Constitution also provides for two alternative methods of ratification, both methods however, leave the ratification decision to the states. Article V of the Constitution sets out two distinct modes of state ratification, leaving the choice of mode to the Congress. For each amendment proposed, whether by Congress of by a national convention, Congress must choose whether to submit the amendment to state legislatures or to conventions in each state for ratification. If the proposed amendment is given to the state legislatures for ratification, a total of three-fourths of the states must agree for the amendment to be passed. Of the thirty-three amendments that have been proposed, thirty-two have been sent to the state legislatures for ratification. The second method involves sending the proposed amendment to the state conventions for ratification. During this process each state must choose delegates, who will then vote for or against the amendment. For this method of ratification there must also be a total of three-fourths (thirty-eight) of the states in agreement.

Having the Constitution amended is a difficult process simply because of the many people that must agree on an amendment for it to become passed. Our founding fathers included these alternative means of both proposing and ratifying amendments in an effort to balance the power between federal and state factions, while allowing input from the common people.

A Constitutional amendment and a law are both rules that the people of the United States must obey. However, the processes that take place are quite different. Although Congress's role in amending the Constitution and in passing a law are similar, there are some differences; the percentage of votes required, the President's role, and the approval process.

Both a proposed amendment and a law are put before Congress for a vote. For each of these the two houses of Congress must also approve identical forms of the amendment of law. A law however, may only be introduced by a Senator or Representative while Congress is in session. The major difference between the voting processes in Congress is the percentage of votes required. In the amendment process a two-thirds vote is required, sixty-six percent. When passing a law a simple majority vote is required, as low as fifty-one percent. This difference obviously makes it easier for a law to get a passing vote in Congress.

The second difference between the amending and the law making process is the President's role. When an amendment is being proposed and ratified it goes through Congress or a Constitutional Convention, then the states. The President has no part in this procedure. When a law is being passed it goes directly to the President after being voted on in Congress. In this situation, the President has three choices. He can sign it, allowing it to become law, he can veto it, or he can ignore it and allow it to become law in ten days (excluding Sundays) without his signature. The President has a much greater role in the law making process, and has a direct influence on the content of the bill.

The third difference between amending the Constitution and passing a law is the approval process, more specifically, who is involve in it. When an amendment is put up for ratification it must go to the state legislatures or the state conventions for approval before becoming an official amendment. A law, on the other hand, requires no approval or input from the states. When passing a bill into law it requires only the majority vote of Congress and the signature of the President. However, if the President decides to veto the bill Congress can override his decision by two-thirds vote in both houses. This process makes passing a law a decision involving only the legislative and executive branches, or possibly just the legislative branch. This is clearly a decision of the federal legislation, requiring little or no assistance from the state government. This process effectively cut out the state government, unlike the amendment process that requires an agreement between the state and national government to be passed.

At the Constitutional Convention of 1787 George Mason of Virginia said, ''Amendments will be necessary, and it will be better to provide for them, in an easy, regular and constitutional way than to trust to chance and violence.'' Our forefathers obviously realized that laws would change and evolve over the years, and that new laws they couldn't even visualize at that point would be needed as times also changed. Fortunately, they also realized that the process to change the very framework and structure of the government, the United States Constitution, must be a much more controlled process. By providing two different methods of proposing and ratifying amendments to the Constitution they made sure that such major changes would be made in agreement by the state and national government. Protecting the interests of both factions, and also reflecting the interests of the people.

TIMES TO REMEMBER

(By Kathleen Steinfels)

Snowshoes . . . candlelight . . . fireplace . . . animal fur . . . buckets of water . . .

All of these are images of life in colonial America. Life was very harsh, especially when compared to life in twentieth century Park Ridge.

Colonia life was centered around the family—much more so than modern American life. Because colonial families were relatively isolated and because each member of the family was counted on to help the entire family survive, family members were close and worked as a team. Chores were distributed: milking cows, feeding chickens, tending crops, chopping firewood, keeping the house in repair and as weathertight as possible, making candles, keeping the fire, collecting water for washing, for watering gardens and animals, making clothes, hunting meat, making food, and caring for younger children. All of these demanded energy and concentration. Often things like schooling became a luxury because education itself was not mandatory for survival. Each family had to be able to provide all basic necessities on its own. Sometimes trading would allow for special treats such as ready-made cloth from overseas, special foods, and shoes.

These things are often taken for granted in modern America where families rarely work together, or, for that matter, rarely even see each other. They have become disjointed as each person pursues independent interests and activities. How often does the nuclear family even sit down at the table to eat a meal together? Does this help explain the disintegrating family of modern America?

Colonial families were large. Many hands were needed to share the workload. Life expectancy was shorter and there was a higher infant mortality rate. Nowadays, families are much smaller and do not have such a strong common focus.

In colonial times the hearth or fireplace was the center of the home, the place from which came both food and warmth. The location of the fireplace affected the way buildings were built. There were few openings to the outside, to minimize heat escaping and for security. Nowadays, the kitchen is still the center of many homes, the source of food, but because of central heating, houses have gotten more complex and full of windows.

Children in colonial times usually worked with their parents whether it be as farmer, cooper, weaver, or blacksmith. Children learned a trade. Each child was important. Nowadays, parents typically go off to work someplace else and the children have little or no connection to the parents' place of work or to the work they do.

In colonial times schooling was not mandatory and schoolhouses were often one-room with a single teacher for many grades. Today schools are much larger and have many teachers, often even more than one per grade.

Colonial Americans came to this New World, abandoning friends, families, and the life they knew to face a challenging new life. Often immigrants came seeking the opportunity to worship God as they wished: Puritans in New England, the Quakers in Pennsylvania, and the Catholics in Maryland. Religion was probably especially important because of the hardships their life imposed. Even if they could not regularly have formal services, God was an important part of life. Today religious freedom is guaranteed, and perhaps even taken for granted.

Gone are the snowshoes, the candles, and the hearth and so too it seems the family-centered life which characterized colonial times.

THE REPUBLIC OF CAPE VERDE'S INDEPENDENCE DAY: REACHING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 1995

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today, as the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Cape Verde's independence approaches, I want to take a moment to commemorate this anniversary and mention the people that have made it possible. As a nation committed to protecting individual freedom and establishing economic stability through democracy, the country's independence celebration is a testament to the will of the Cape Verdean people who, brought together by their struggle for freedom and the archipelago's environment, remind us of their American counterparts. Indeed, Cape Verdeans are very familiar with American history; they are, in fact, an integral part of it. Since the 18th century, Cape Verdeans have represented an assiduous and determined part of the American spirit, particularly in New England. Cape Verdeans were builders of the whaling and fishing industry, cultivators of the cranberry bogs and workers in the textile mills. Their arts and crafts have enhanced the beauty of our lives, and their songs and dances have touched our hearts

and our souls. So this year we celebrate the Republic's independence and our own acknowledgment of the Cape Verdean role in American culture at the 29th annual Festival of American Folklife, which opened last week at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC. In the future, we look forward to participating in the growth of a nation abroad and the celebration of its traditions at home.

REDUCTION IN VIP AIRCRAFT

HON. PETER A. DeFAZIO

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 1995

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, we have spent a great deal of time this week debating the Federal budget. I believe all Members can agree on the need to eliminate unjustifiable spending. At least one item in the Department of Defense budget falls into this category: the Pentagon's huge fleet of VIP aircraft. I have joined with 10 of my colleagues in introducing legislation to sell off some of these ''generals' jets,'' which would result in a budget savings of at least $130 to $200 million a year.

The Department of Defense has a fleet of about 600 aircraft that are used to transport senior military personnel and civilian officials. About 500 fixed-wing planes and 100 helicopters perform administrative support missions. These aircraft do not include the Presidential aircraft, the 89th Military Airlift Wing, such as Air Force One, nor are they used for operational transport of troops. Rather, they are used for airlift transportation in support of command, installation, or management functions.

The General Accounting Office found that size of the administrative aircraft fleet—often called Operational Support Aircraft—far exceeds the wartime requirements, even according to the Pentagon's own estimates. Only 48 OSA were used ''in theater'' during the gulf war. This suggests that OSA aircraft's main role is not wartime, but peacetime. Even in the United States, the gulf war saw the services using much less than one-half of their inventory. The Commission on Roles and Missions also recommended reducing the size of the OSA fleet. In 1993, the Joint Chiefs report concluded that OSA inventories exceed wartime requirements. The Air Force concurred with the Joint Chiefs in 1994.

However, nothing has yet been done to eliminate the excess aircraft.

The public first heard about the aircraft issue last fall when a high-ranking Air Force general made a very expensive flight from Italy to Colorado. Although the flight was made for administrative purposes, and much less expensive commercial flights were available, a single general and his aide spent more than $100,000 for the trip. The Air Force is even using their OSA planes to fly Air Force cadets to Hawaii to watch football games.

Perks at the Pentagon are no more justifiable than perks in any other agency of the Federal Government. If Congress is to have any hope of balancing the budget during the coming decade, we must focus our attention on reducing budget outlays. This means ending some programs that have little justification. Our bill would offer the American people significant reduction in spending that could either reduce the Federal debt or fund other, more critical spending priorities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in bringing high-flying generals down to Earth. Let's save taxpayer dollars by paring this Pentagon perk.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ADOPTION INCENTIVES ACT OF 1995

HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 1995

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Adoption Incentives Act of 1995 in an effort to encourage more adoptions in our country.

This bill will provide a range of tax incentives to adoptive parents to help them build families through adoption. Specifically, the bill will make adoption assistance benefits to military and private sector employees for nonrecurring adoption expenses tax-free, and allow penalty-free and tax-free withdrawals from individual retirement accounts [IRA's] for adoption expenses.

There is a desperate need for adoption in our country. Today, almost half a million children are in foster care. Some of these kids languish in the foster care system for more than 5 years, bouncing from one home to another. Between 85,000 and 100,000 of these children are legally free and waiting to be adopted. An additional 3 million children were reported abused or neglected in 1993. Many may need a safe haven—a welcoming home that adoption could provide.

One major obstacle to finding permanent, loving homes for these children is the cost of adoption. The average cost of a private or nonagency adoption is conservatively estimated at $10,000 and can run as high as $45,000. Many adoptive families have to mortgage their homes or borrow money from relatives to build a family.

In response, 180 of the Fortune 1,000 companies have established corporate programs that provide financial assistance to employees to help cover adoption expenses. Behind borrowing money and mortgaging homes, reimbursement benefits provided by employers are the third major way in which parents finance adoptions.These benefits average $2,000 per adoption. In 1993, corporate adoption assistance programs facilitated 2,000 of the 50,000 adoptions that occurred.

The private sector has been especially creative in providing incentives for adoption. We must do more to encourage their efforts—as this bill does.

A similar adoption assistance program was established for military personnel in the defense authorization bill of 1991. Military families are entitled to up to $2,000 to cover adoption-related expenses. Launching this program sent a positive signal to adoption agencies that were often reluctant to start the adoption process due to frequent relocations of many military families. As a result, almost 2,500 children have been adopted with this assistance.

The Adoption Incentives Act would also permit penalty-free and tax-free withdrawals from IRA's for adoption costs. Many of the tax proposals now pending before Congress would allow penalty-free IRA withdrawals for college tuition, buying a first home, or caring for an elderly parent, as well as catastrophic medical expenses. Shouldn't adoption be encouraged in this same way? The answer is clear—adoption is also an investment in the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we send the message that adoption is a valued way of building a family and a future for our children. It is a goal we should all support.

EDITORIAL ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 1995

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I want to share with you the insights of John E. Warren, editor and publisher of the San Diego Voice & Viewpoint, an African-American newspaper published in my hometown.

In a recent editorial, Warren wrote:

As America appears to be gearing up to make affirmative action the new symbol for the age old attack on the idea of equality and fairness for Blacks in this country, first, then all other groups but White males, it is extremely important that the Black response be one of reason, power, and direct results.

While it is fine to pen letters and speeches of response to the Pete Wilsons who would ride the horse of bigotry and racism into the U.S. Presidency if permitted, those letters and speeches must not become substitutes for direct action. The well known question is then asked: ''What can African-Americans do to reach the moral conscious of an increasingly White America that appears to think it has done too much for too many who said things were not fair and now think that fairness is becoming an inconvenience as times get harder in a changing economy?''

Perhaps the key can be found in the paraphrase of a very old proverb ''he who controls himself is better than he who controls nations.''

Blacks continue to spend billions of dollars in every facet of the American economy with no economic demand for returns on our investments. We spend $300 billion dollars a year collectively and we are begging a nation and its leaders to treat us ''morally right'' when we have not assumed the ''moral responsibility'' for ourselves.

African-Americans must remember that this country is now following a contract on America instead of the U.S. Constitution which Wade Henderson of the NAACP rightly called ''our contract with America.''

Consider that African-Americans have a vote, but most won't bother to use it. We have disposable income for clothes, too many of which are designed for our youth as gang attire, but we don't make these clothes. We buy new cars all over San Diego—many of which are the same as the ones sold by our one Black owned car dealership, but purchased from people who neither care for us or our communities.

We buy liquor, cigarettes, potato chips, butter and toilet tissue in larger numbers than any other ethnic group and make no demands in return. Some of those very people who benefit from our care-free spending habits use those same dollars to buy political votes across this nation that are now focused against our common good—the right to a job based on fairness and merit, the right to social insurance in time of need, the right to food, shelter and education, not based on the