

CONSTITUTION DAY

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Former Governor George H. Earle liked long weekends, and whenever reasonably possible he set up a holiday that would invariably fall on a Friday. Recently the Federal Government followed in Earle's footsteps by changing some national holidays so that they fell on Monday, thereby giving workers a three-day holiday...the old George Earle idea! Washington's Birthday, Columbus Day have been added to Mondays--regardless of the position of February 22 or October 12 on your calendar. Back in 1936, the State Legislature passed a bill, known as Act 239, setting up Constitution Day as a proper day to observe the ratification of the Federal Constitution. Earle was quick to designate the third Friday in September as a state holiday to be known as Constitution Day in Pennsylvania. With the change of administration, the practice of making Constitution Day a state holiday was abandoned. Here in Pennsylvania, on December 12, 1787, the Federal Constitution was ratified 43 to 23. Over the years, each Governor of Pennsylvania has issued a proclamation urging the citizenry to "renew their understanding and appreciation of that great document, and to commemorate the anniversary of its adoption with appropriate ceremonies and activities". Today we remember again that the Constitution gives us the foundation for a free, prosperous and independent life, but each generation must work for and claim it, otherwise through carelessness or indifference, the rights and liberties we have

enjoyed may vanish. The Governors annual Constitution Day proclamation--to be issued again--urges that the people of Pennsylvania join in paying special tribute to those persons who have just become United States Citizens through naturalization, and to those young people who have just come of age and are now full-fledged citizens with all the rights and responsibilities that go with this privilege. It is a double-day, one thinks--to remember both the Federal and State Constitution. Our own Pennsylvania document was put into effect only 11 days after the Declaration of Independence. In the 1790 Constitution, we elected our first Governor in Thomas Mifflin. In 1839 other constitutional changes made local officials and judges elective. In 1874 the constitution underwent changes that instituted our Blue Laws. Seven years ago we again amended the Pennsylvania Constitution. The Federal Constitution and our own Pennsylvania document are the very heart of our democratic life--and here in Pennsylvania--where this nation was born, its words should have more meaning than in any other place. Reason enough to celebrate Constitution Day in Pennsylvania this week--and every week. In the old Governor Earle tradition--the official day would be tomorrow.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.