Remarks at the “We the People” Bicentennial Celebration in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

September 17, 1987

President Ronald Reagan served as President during the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution. In the speech that follows, President Reagan is standing in front of Constitution Hall where the framers signed the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The site had great historic significance.

President Ronald Reagan spoke about his respect for the Constitution as well as the role of a Constitution in a democracy.
Questions:

1. What does the term “architecture of democratic government” mean?
2. How is the Constitution the “architecture of democratic government?”
4. Which contemporary country has the longest standing democratic government?
5. List a democratic government which does not have a written Constitution.
6. Do you think you can have a democracy without checks and balances? Explain.
7. What does the term “judicial restraint” mean?
8. Why did President Ronald Reagan believe judicial restraint was important?
9. Who evaluates whether a judge is using judicial restraint?

Connections to California State Standards:

   8.2- Students analyze the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government.
   11.1- Students analyze the significant events in the founding of the nation and its attempts to realize the philosophy of government described in the Declaration of Independence.
   12.1- Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.
   12.4- Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

--- Document courtesy of Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Archives ---