

2
9/17/2015
page 1
Communications: To the Council, citizens
of Cambridge, MA and citizens of the
United States of America, from Peter Valentine
37 Brookline St. I've heard it said about twice
that the citizens of the United States of America
were not citizens of the "United States" this I think
gave power ~~to~~ ^{to} the people who wanted to hold power
over "The People" in certain ways.

So as you can see I wrote the Library of Congress
for a clarification. There is no separate thing
as the 'United States'.
Peter Valentine

2015 SEP 21 PM 12 56

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HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION

September 14, 2015

Mr. Peter Valentine
37 Brookline St.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Mr. Valentine:

Thank you for your inquiry about the terms "United States" and "United States of America." The term "United States" is indeed a shortened or alternate version of "United States of America," and the terms do not represent separate entities with separate rights and protections.

To see an example of the terms being used interchangeably, you can look at the text of the Constitution of the United States. You should be able to find a transcript of the Constitution in your local library, or you may view the text through the National Archives and Records Administration's website. To see the text:

- Go to www.archives.gov
- Click **Research our Records**.
- On the right-hand side of the page, under **Most Requested**, click **The Constitution**.
- Click **read transcript**.

Note that the document is titled "The Constitution of the United States." The preamble, however, reads as follows:

We the people of the *United States*, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the *United States of America* [Emphasis added] (*U.S. Const.*, pmb.).

The terms "United States" and "United States of America" are used interchangeably throughout the document.

Peter Valentine page 2
9/17/2015

Peter Valentine page 3
9/17/2015

2015 SEP 21 PM 12 56

Mr. Peter Valentine
September 14, 2015
Page 2

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For a thorough examination of the terms used to describe the United States, I recommend that you read Allen Walker Read's *America – Naming the Country and Its People*. This book is available at several public libraries, including Boston Public Library. In the book, Read quotes a 1902 paper by scholar Albert Matthews:

For a few years, even before the Declaration of Independence, though no single colony was individually called a State, the colonies collectively were occasionally referred to as 'the American States,' or 'the States of America.' When, therefore, on July 4, 1776, the thirteen colonies ceased to be colonies and were formed into a union of States, it was inevitable that each should individually be called a State, and that collectively they should be called 'the United States of America,' or 'the States of America,' or 'the American States,' or 'the United States,' or simply, 'the States.' (pp. 37-38).

As you can see, there are several derivations or abbreviations used to refer to United States of America. However, all of the terms refer to the same entity.

Thank you for sending a \$5.00 bill with your inquiry. However, employees of the Library of Congress cannot accept payment for their services. We have enclosed your \$5.00 bill with this letter.

We hope this information is helpful, and we thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

M.C.
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The Library of Congress
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