

Virginia



On 25 June 1788, Virginia became the 10th colony to ratify the U.S. Constitution by a vote of 89-79.

Though flags similar to Virginia's current flag had flown in the State since the 1830s, Virginia did not adopt an official flag until after it had seceded from the Union in 1861. The Flag of the Commonwealth was adopted on April 30, 1861 almost two weeks after Virginia voted, on April 17, 1861, to repeal its 1788 ratification of the Constitution of the United States. The Virginia Flag of the Commonwealth displays the [State Seal of Virginia](#) centered on a [blue field](#) (background).

From January through mid-April, delegates to the 1861 Virginia Convention staved off efforts to vote Virginia out of the Union but their efforts fell short on April 17, perhaps assisted by the announcement that President Abraham Lincoln had just called for 75,000 volunteers for the Union army. In a vote adopting "An Ordinance to repeal the ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America, by the State of Virginia, and to resume all the rights and powers granted under said Constitution," Virginia declared its sovereignty and opened the way for the Commonwealth to join the Confederate States of America (CSA).

On April 30, 1861, a flag very similar to the current flag was adopted when Ordinance No. 30 was embraced by the Virginia Convention of 1861 -- The Secession Convention. This ordinance was ratified by a vote of the electorate in May.

Roman mythology defines the unique Great Seal of Virginia. The obverse of the seal features the Roman goddess Virtus standing over a defeated opponent. Virtus is dressed in Amazonian garb, and holds a spear and a sheathed sword. She represents the virtues of heroism, righteousness, freedom, and valor. She stands in a classical victor's pose over a fallen tyrannical foe, whose crown lies on the ground. The state's motto "Sic Semper Tyrannis" ("Thus Always to Tyrants") appears at the lower edge. The seal was approved at Virginia's 1776 Constitutional Convention, and the principal designer is said to have been George Wythe. A committee composed of Wythe, George Mason, Robert Carter Nicholas, and Richard Henry Lee collaborated on the design. In 1930 another committee was charged with standardizing the seal's design because of all the variations that came into use over the years. What the committee approved was basically adopting the 1776 seal as the standard. In 1949, another standard was implemented, when Virginia's Art Commission defined the official color scheme for the seal.