



# ***GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES***



## **E Pluribus Unum**

E Pluribus Unum means "**out of many, comes one**". It comes from a popular publication during revolutionary times entitled *Gentleman's Magazine* which carried that legend upon the title page. On July 4th, 1776, the Congressional Congress appointed a committee consisting of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. The seal shows a bald eagle with a ribbon in its' mouth and on the reverse of the seal an unfinished pyramid with an eye (the eye of providence) above it. The design of the obverse ( front) is used by Government for coins, public monuments, passports. The seal can be affixed only by an Officer of the Department of State, under the authority of its custodian, the Secretary of State.

## **In God We Trust**

**On July 30, 1956 a law was passed stating that "the national motto of the United States is hereby declared to be 'In God we trust'." (70 Stat. 732. 36 U.S. Code 186).** The House Judiciary Committee recognized that the phrase E Pluribus Unum had also received wide usage in the United States, and the joint resolution did not repeal or prohibit its use as a national motto. In 1963 the Department of State took the following position: **"'In God we trust'" is the motto of the United States. It seems to the Department, nevertheless, that there is ample basis both in history and in law for calling 'E Pluribus Unum' a motto of the United States.**" The Congress has used both.

## **Congress represented by blue top of shield**

Symbolically, **the Seal reflects the beliefs and values that the Founding Fathers attached to the new nation and wished to pass on to their descendants.** The most prominent feature is the American bald eagle supporting the shield, or escutcheon, which is composed of 13 red and white stripes, representing the original states; and a blue top which unites the shield and represents Congress. The motto "E Pluribus Unum" ("Out of Many, One") alludes to this union. **The olive branch and 13 arrows denote the power of peace and war, which is exclusively vested in Congress.** The constellation of stars denotes a new state taking its place and rank among other sovereign powers.

## **Colors:**

The colors are adopted from the American flag: **"White signifies purity and innocence, Red, hardiness & valour, and Blue, the colour of the Chief, signifies vigilance, perseverance & justice."** The shield, or escutcheon, is "born on the breast of an American Eagle without any other supporters to denote that **the United States of America ought to rely on their own Virtue.**"

The number 13, **denoting the 13 original States**, is represented in the bundle of arrows, the stripes of the shield, and the stars of the constellation. The olive branch and **the arrows "denote the power of peace & war."** The constellation of stars symbolizes a new nation taking its place among other sovereign states. The motto *E Pluribus Unum*, emblazoned across the scroll and clenched in the eagle's beak, expresses the union of the 13 States.

The reverse, sometimes referred to as the spiritual side of the seal, contains the 13-step pyramid with the year 1776 in Roman numerals on the base. At the summit of the pyramid is the Eye of Providence in a triangle surrounded by a Glory (rays of light) and above it appears the motto ***Annuit Coeptis (God has favored our undertakings)***. Along the lower circumference of the design appear the words ***Novus Ordo Seclorum (A new order of the ages)***, heralding the beginning of the new American era in 1776.