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Swiss Say Cheese

The Swiss Charter of Confederation, the Bundesbrief, will arrive in Philadelphia on June 10 for a special, three-week exhibition of "Sister Republics" at the National Constitution Center (NCC).

The Bundesbrief—a precursor to the Declaration of Independence—was drafted in 1291 during a time of strife in the country; the main cantons of Switzerland had declared themselves an independent country. America's forefathers **Ben Franklin** and **Thomas Jefferson** also used parts of the Bundesbrief as an example before the U.S. Constitution was drafted.

Housed in a museum in a town called Schwyz, the document is written in Latin, and will arrive here in a special bullet-proof case. Some were concerned about the ancient document traveling abroad and resisted the trip, according to the Bundesbrief Museum curator **Michel Kaspar**, but Swiss officials prevailed. The Bundesbrief visit is part of the Swiss Roots project, an initiative that promotes relations between Americans with Swiss ancestry and the land of their lineage. More than one million Americans are of Swiss decent.