

# The Constitutional Convention



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Problems like Shays' Rebellion revealed the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation  
This event convinced many U.S. citizens that our 1<sup>st</sup> written plan of government needed to  
be revised/rewritten

25 May 1787 – 17 September  
1787, Philadelphia at  
Independence Hall

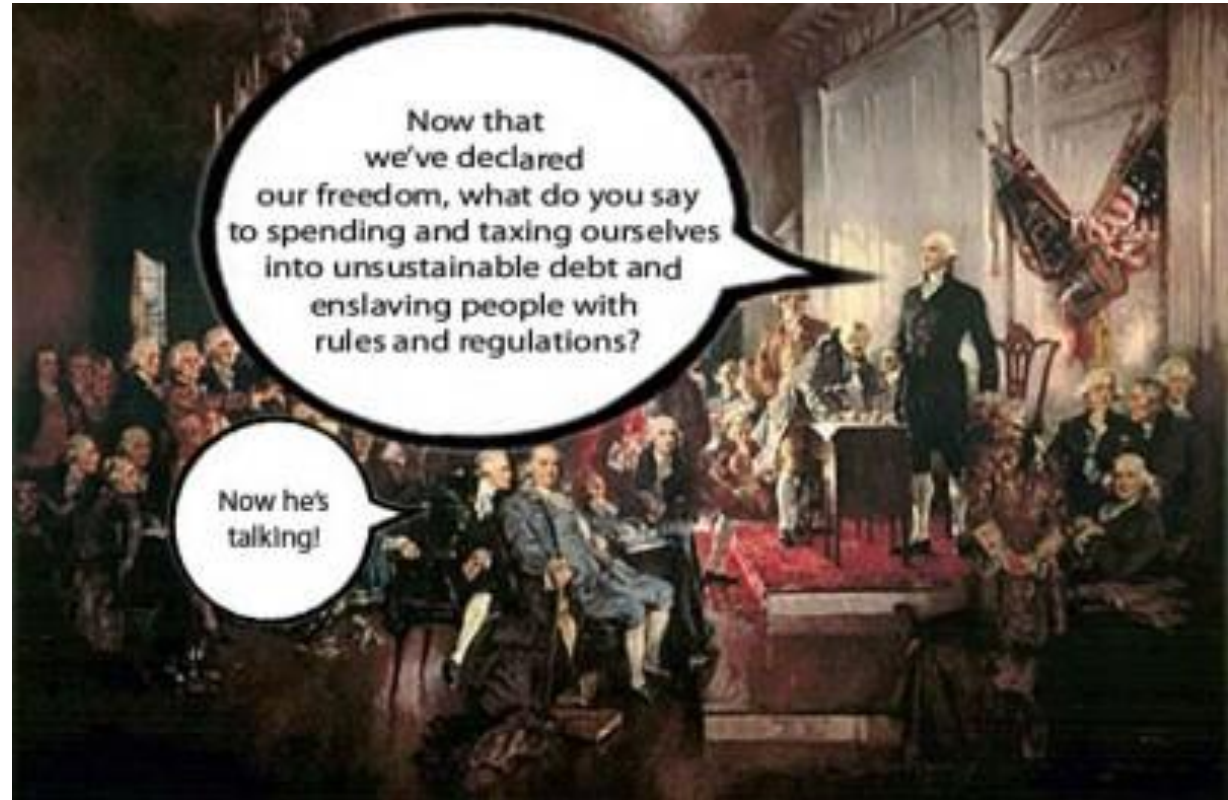
Original purpose was to  
*revise* the Articles of  
Confederation and prevent  
“mobocracy”

12 of 13 states present

(Rhode Island absent  
because they opposed a  
stronger central govt)

55 delegates

8 signed DOI, 7 governors,  
44 were members of the  
Continental Congress, 29  
had served in the  
Revolutionary War, Gen.  
Washington, Madison (2  
future U.S. presidents), Ben



No people ever had a fairer opportunity to be what they anxiously wished to be - none ever neglected their interest more.

Tristram Dalton, in a letter to John Adams, July 1786

tweet the *Debates*



Votes on decisions made: equal representation (one vote per state)

Rule: keep discussions from the convention secret – WHY?

To avoid public pressure and allow delegates to speak freely

How would the revised document be ratified?

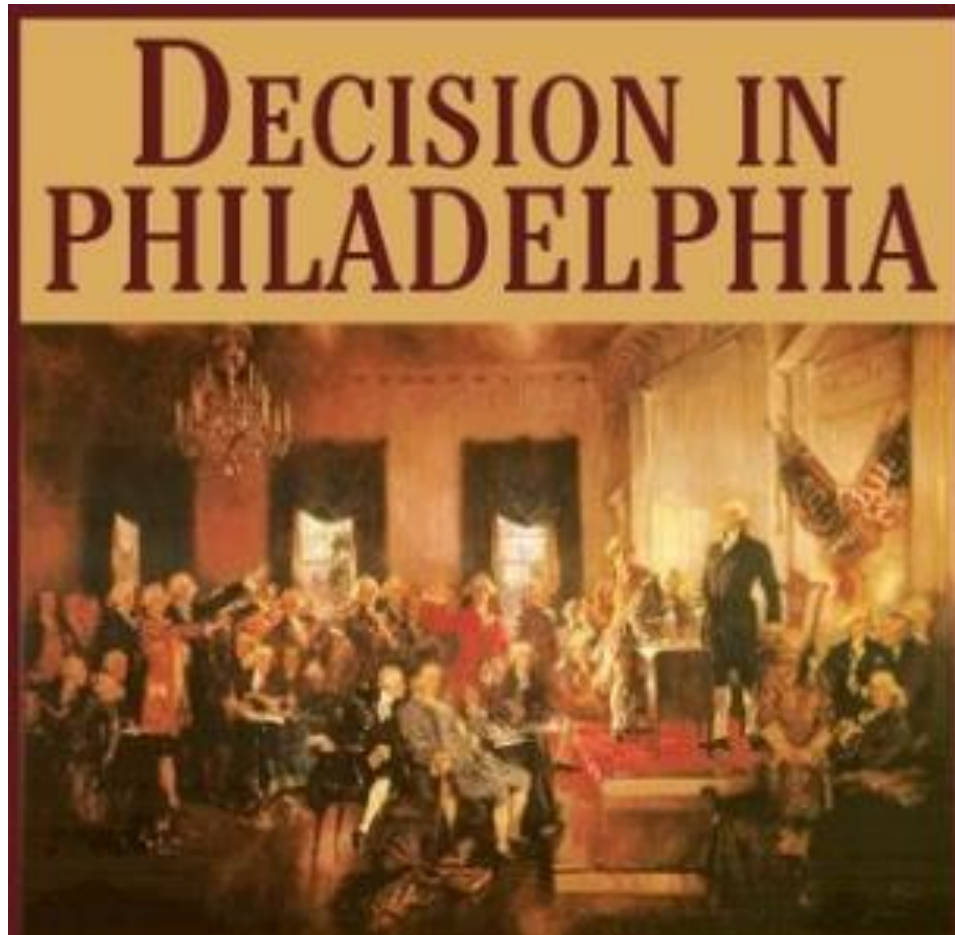
“Majority rules” – 9 out of 13 would have to sign new document to ratify (pass)

\*Technically it should have been unanimously agreed upon when there was a change in the AoC\*

## Three Big Issues up for Debate

### 1. Representation in Congress:

- Larger states argued they had more people so they should have more representatives from that state voting on laws (their votes on legislation would carry more weight)
- Smaller states argued that having a small population shouldn't mean their votes weigh less



## Representation Plans Proposed

**Virginia Plan** proposed by James Madison

-3 branches (L, E, J)

-*Bicameral* Congress (2 houses) with the amount of delegates given based on population of state

Appealed to MA, NY, PA, VA

**Large states would have more lawmaking votes than smaller states**

**New Jersey Plan** proposed by William Paterson; similar to the AoC's current plan

-Unicameral Congress with equal votes per state; not based on pop.

-“Group” executive branch

Appealed to MD, DE, NJ

**Promoted states' rights and kept the power concentrated at that level**



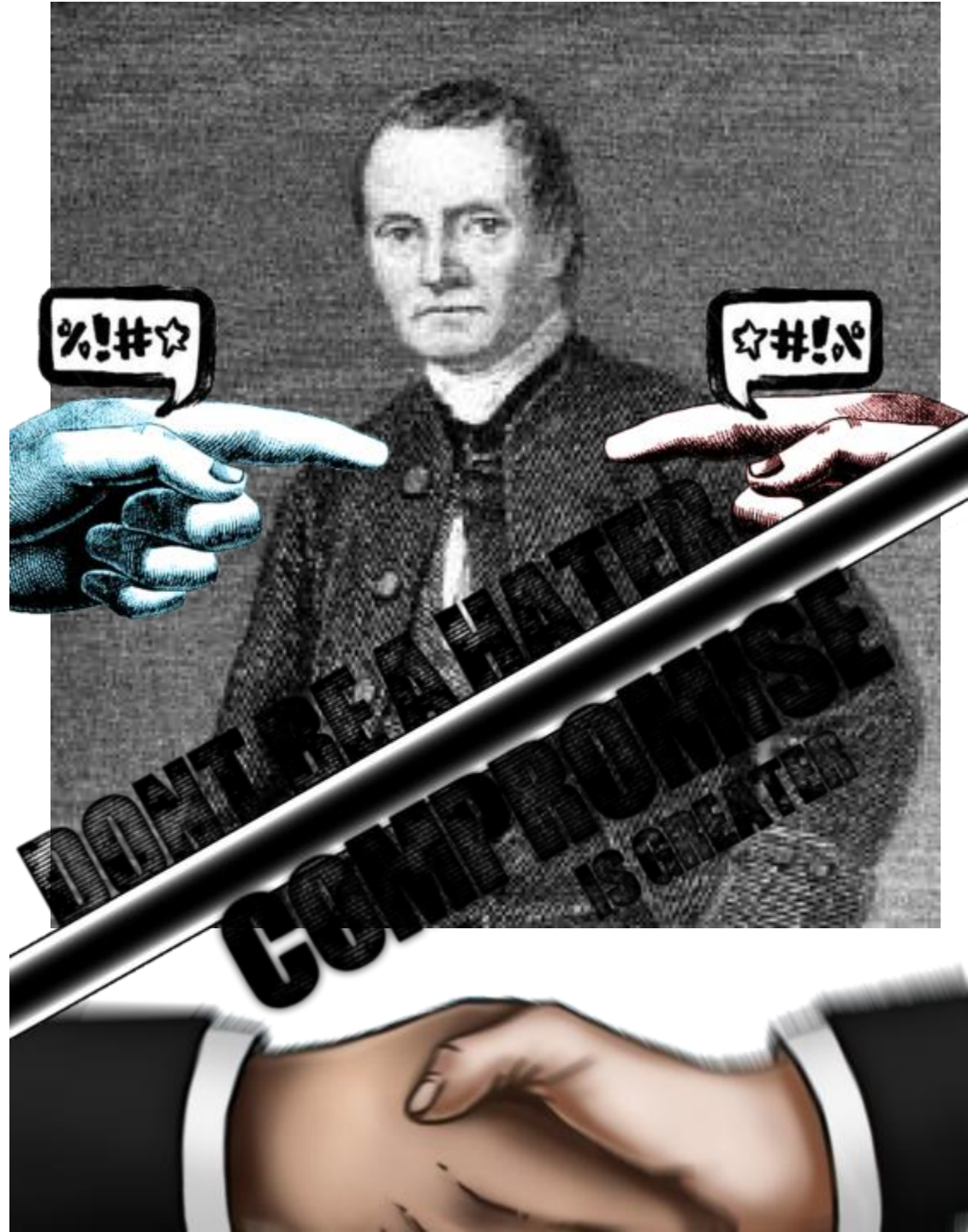
# Compromise Reached

**Roger Sherman** proposed the  
“**Great Compromise**”

-*Bicameral* legislature with one house based on population & the other house given equal representatives

House of Representatives:  
number of delegates a state received would be based on the number of people in that state; tax/appropriation bills would need to start here

Senate: equal representation; 2 Senators per state, regardless of size



## Issues up for Debate

### 1. Representation in Congress:

- Larger states argued they had more people so more representatives from that state (more voice in legislation)
- Smaller states argued that having a small population shouldn't mean they don't get as many representatives

### 2. Slavery:

Should a state's population of enslaved persons be counted in the population for representation?  
Should we ban it altogether?

-1774: some members of the CC called for withdrawal of involvement in the transatlantic slave trade)

-1775: PA Quakers founded the 1<sup>st</sup> antislavery society



# The Issue of Slavery

At the time: 550,000 enslaved persons in the U.S.

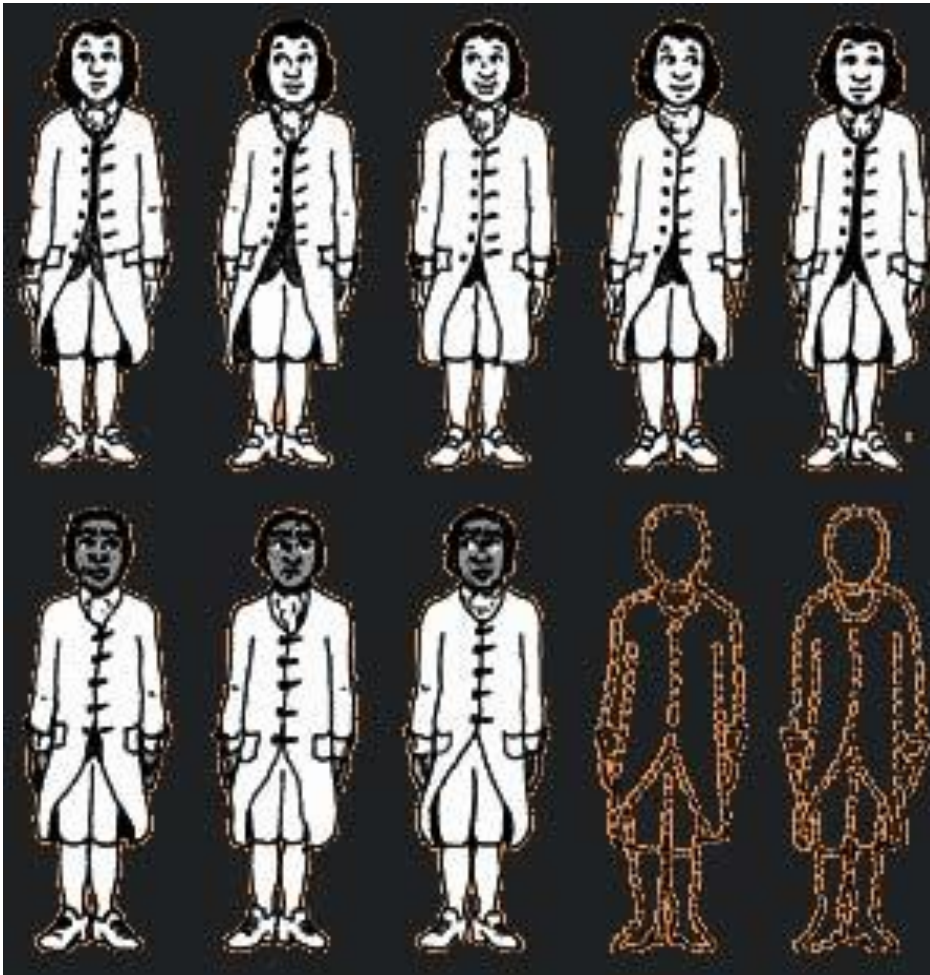
What would delegates from Southern states want?

**3/5ths Compromise:** 3/5ths of a state's enslaved population would count towards a state's population in the House of Representatives

One argument of Northern delegates was that since enslaved persons weren't allowed to vote or participate in govt why should they count at all?

**Slave Trade Compromise:** Southern delegates agreed that Congress could regulate trade between the states **IF** Northern delegates agreed not to interfere with the transatlantic slave trade and revisit the issue in 1808

\*Northern delegates wanted imports taxed, but to avoid upsetting the Southerners, it was agreed not to tax exported goods





# Issues up for Debate

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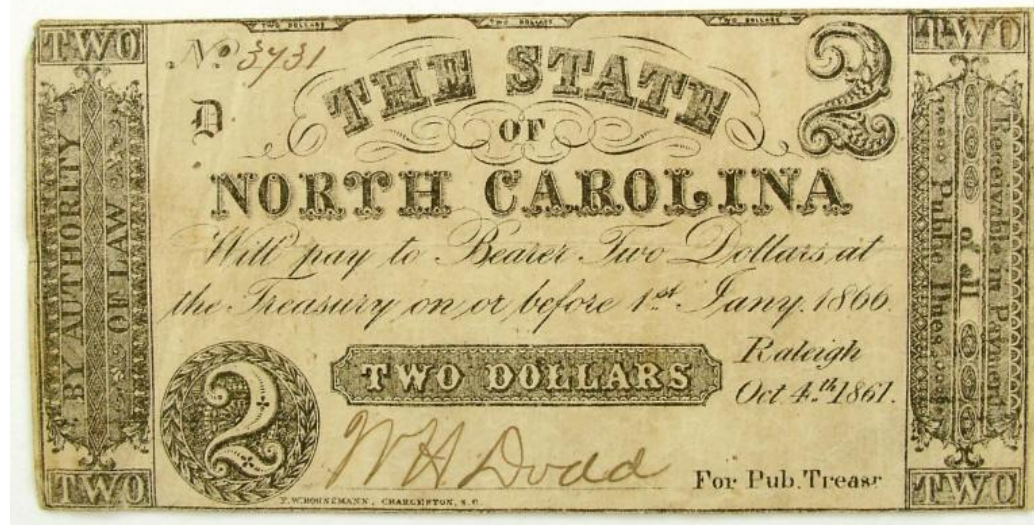


## 2. Slavery:

Should a state's enslaved persons be counted in the population for representation? Should they ban it altogether?

## 3. Economic issues:

- Congress given the power to tax, maintain and regulate trade, print and coin \$, tariffs, etc.



## U.S. Constitution

1. Much stronger central/federal/national govt
2. National govt had the power to tax citizens to earn revenue
3. National govt regulates trade between states (interstate commerce)
4. Executive branch with a president (elected by the Electoral College) who would also be Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces
5. Needed 9 of 13 to ratify
6. Scratched the “Confederation” idea in favor of more of a true Republic

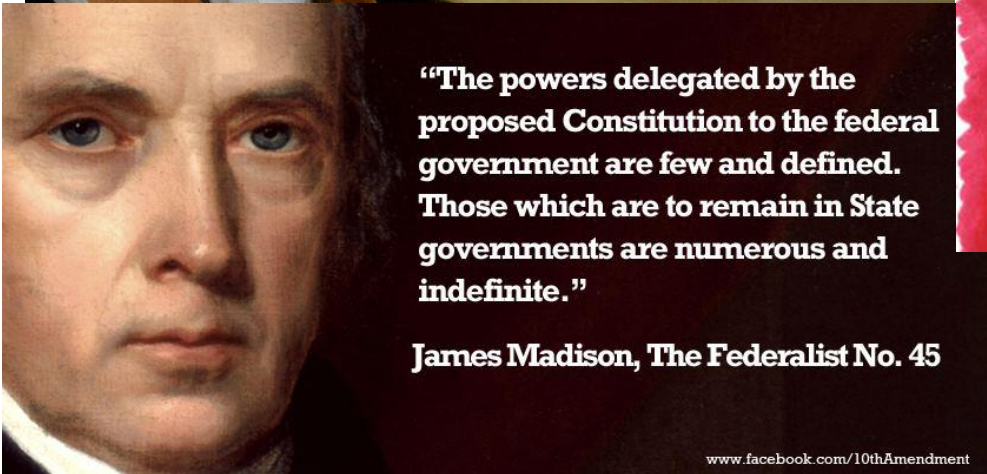
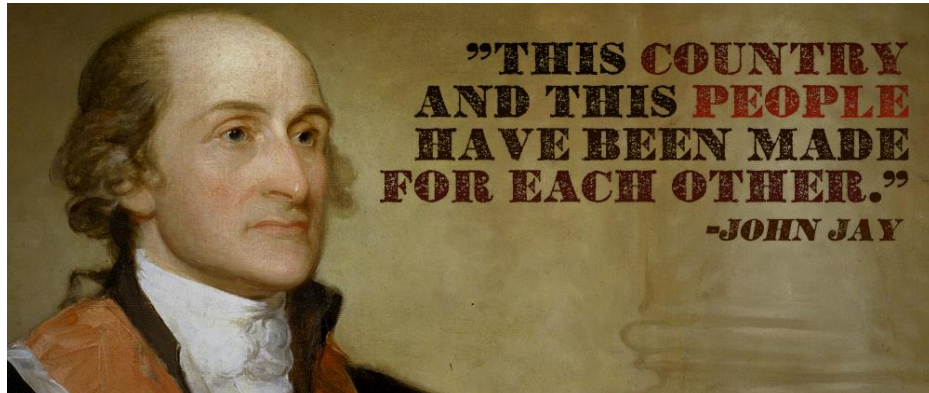


# Ratifying the U.S.C.

**Federalists** formed in support of the passage of the U.S.C.

-Favored stronger national govt (“NATIONAL”ists); many landowners who wanted property protection that a strong govt could provide

*Federalist Papers*: essays printed in newspapers to support the U.S.C.’s ratification; Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay authored under the pen name “Publius”



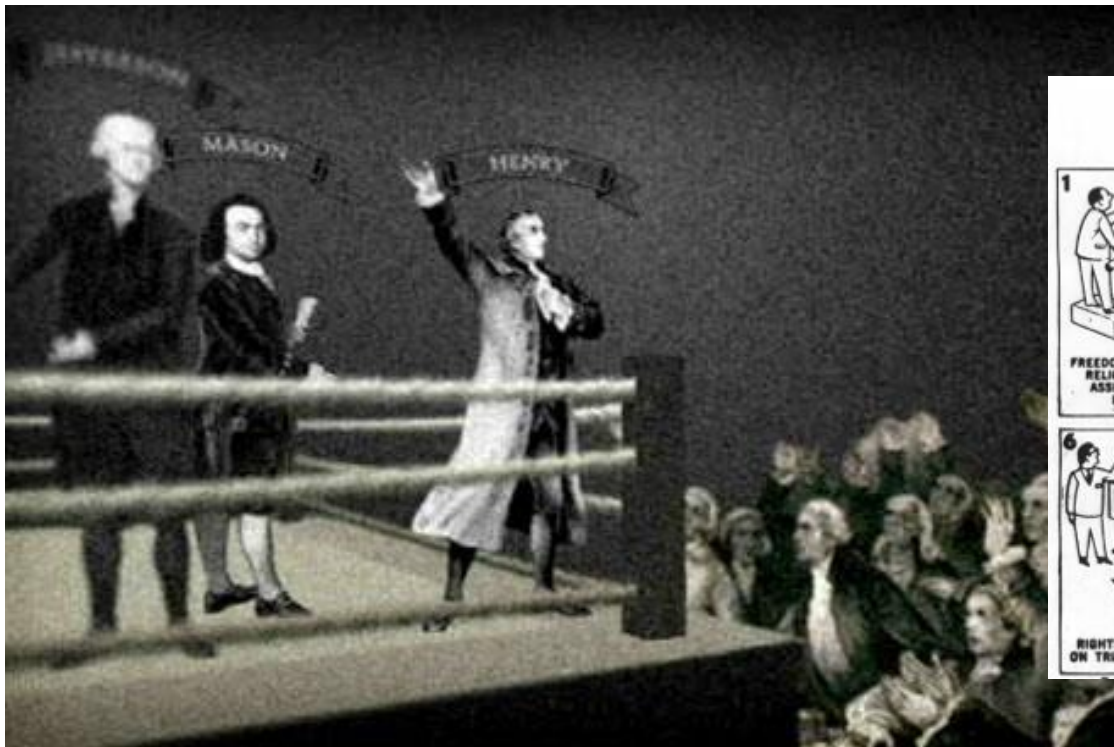
**Anti-Federalists** opposed the U.S.C. (they were against a strong national govt that the new constitution had created)

-Thought a strong national govt would take away the rights they fought for in the Revolution

-Feared new govt would favor the wealthy instead of the common people because it did not list out rights guaranteed to citizens

## Compromise?

Federalist promised a **Bill of Rights** in exchange for ratification



## ...17 Weeks Later

17 September, 42 members were left at the Convention, 3 refused to sign the Constitution; special elections were held in the states for members of the ratifying conventions

PA → MA → and the total 9 needed by 21 June 1788

VA and NY finally ratified, NC held a convention but never voted and RI never even held a convention

### *The Ninth PILLAR erected !*

“The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the establishment of this Constitution, between the States so ratifying the same.” *Art. vii.*

*INCIPIENT MAGNI PROCEDERE MENSES.*



	<b>Federalists</b>	<b>(Anti-Federalists) later become the Democratic-Republicans</b>
Leaders	Hamilton and Adams	Jefferson and *Madison
Demographics	Manufacturers, merchants, wealthy, Northerners, educated, urban, usually eastern seaboard	Farmers, Southerners, rural, western territories
Ideal Government	National authority over the states, “loose interpretation” of the USC (implied powers), educated “elite” lead country, large & powerful govt necessary to protect land and international interests	State sovereignty over national supremacy, “strict interpretation” of the USC (expressed powers), nation of “small, yeoman farmers”, individual rights are paramount, “small govt”
Domestic Policy	National Bank Excise tax Favored a national debt through assumption Tariffs	Anti BUS Anti-excise tax Anti-debt, states pay their own Low/No tariffs
Foreign Policy	Opposed French Revolution Angered by French actions Favored GB	Supported F.R. Disliked GB

Long Essay  
Question  
“LEQ” (aka  
Free Response  
Question  
“FRQ”)

The United States Constitution of 1787 represented an economic and ideological victory for the traditional political elite. Assess the validity of this statement for the period 1781 to 1789.

AP History LEQ Rubric (6 points)

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	Decision Rules
<b>A THESIS/CLAIM</b> (0–1 pt)	1 pt. Responds to the prompt with a historically defensible thesis/claim that establishes a line of reasoning.	<i>To earn this point, the thesis must make a claim that responds to the prompt, rather than merely restating or rephrasing the prompt. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.</i>
<b>B CONTEXTUALIZATION</b> (0–1 pt)	1 pt. Describes a broader historical context relevant to the prompt.	<i>To earn this point, the response must relate the topic of the prompt to broader historical events, developments, or processes that occur before, during, or continue after the time frame of the question. This point is not awarded for merely a phrase or a reference.</i>
<b>C EVIDENCE</b> (0–2 pts)	1 pt. Provides specific examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.	OR 2 pts. Supports an argument in response to the prompt using specific and relevant examples of evidence.
<b>D ANALYSIS AND REASONING</b> (0–2 pts)	1 pt. Uses historical reasoning (e.g. comparison, causation, CCOT) to frame or structure an argument that addresses the prompt.	OR 2 pts. Demonstrates a complex understanding of the historical development that is the focus of the prompt, using evidence to corroborate, qualify, or modify an argument that addresses the question.
		<p><i>To earn one point, the response must identify specific historical examples of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</i></p> <p><i>To earn two points the response must use specific historical evidence to support an argument in response to the prompt.</i></p> <p><i>To earn the first point, the response must demonstrate the use of historical reasoning to frame or structure an argument, although the reasoning might be uneven or imbalanced.</i></p> <p><i>To earn the second point, the response must demonstrate a complex understanding. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, such as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Explaining nuance of an issue by analyzing multiple variables</i></li> <li><i>Explaining both similarity and difference, or explaining both continuity and change, or explaining multiple causes, or explaining both causes and effects</i></li> <li><i>Explaining relevant and insightful connections within and across periods</i></li> <li><i>Confirming the validity of an argument by corroborating multiple perspectives across themes</i></li> <li><i>Qualifying or modifying an argument by considering diverse or alternative views or evidence</i></li> </ul> <p><i>This understanding must be part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</i></p>