

# 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

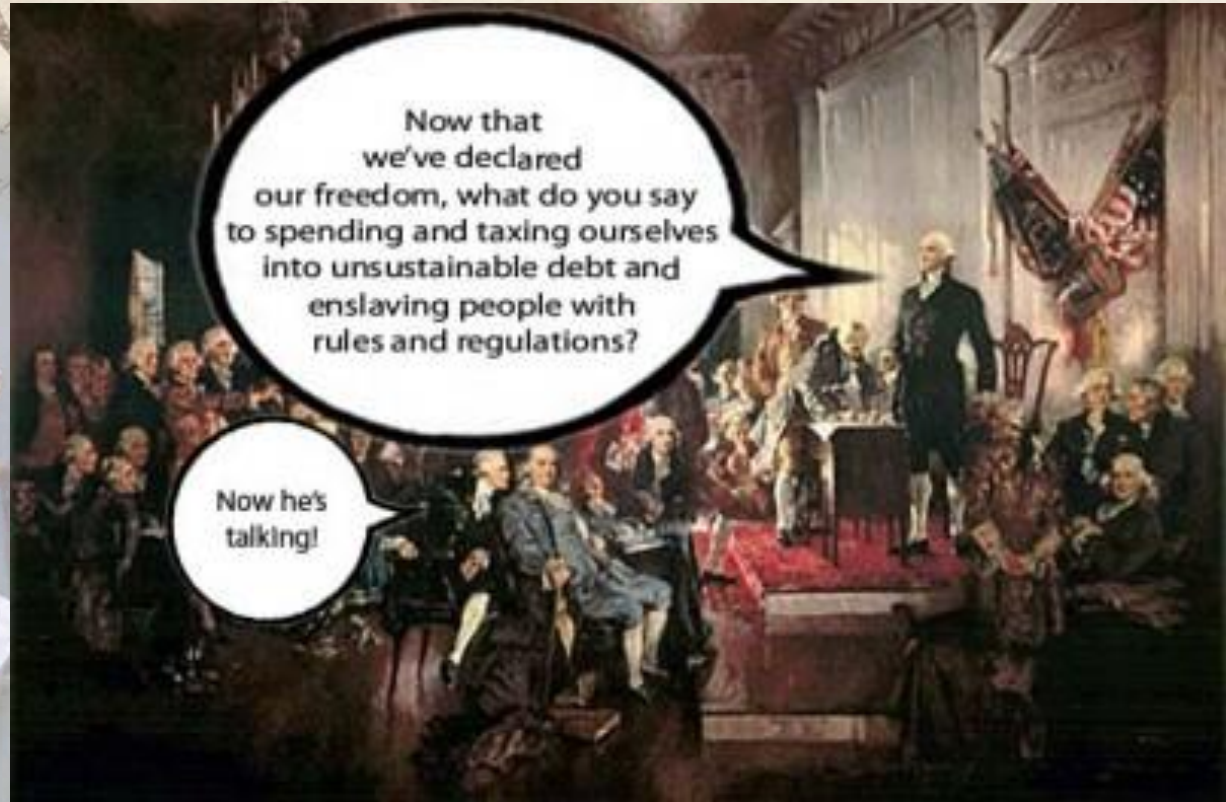
Original purpose was to  
*revise* the Articles of  
Confederation and prevent  
“mobocracy”

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

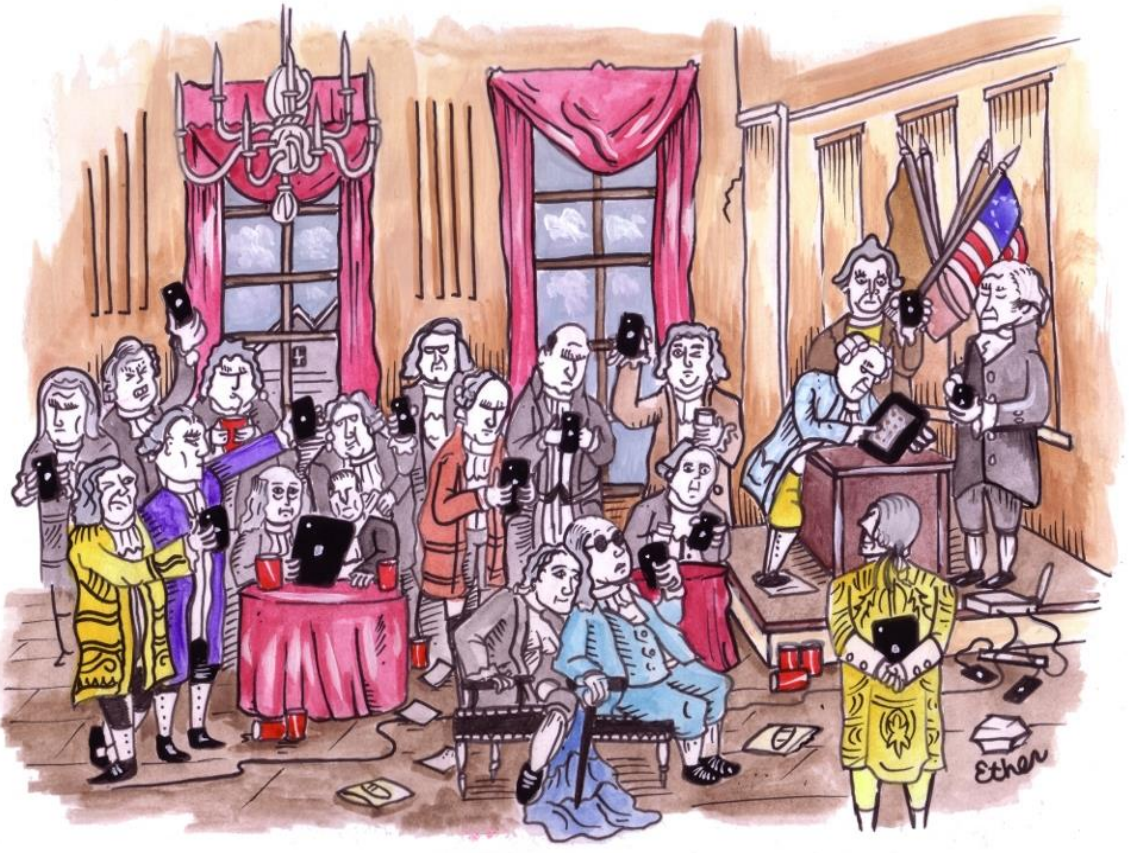




No people ever had a fairer opportunity to be what they anxiously wished to be - none ever neglected their interest more.

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

# DECISION IN PHILADELPHIA





# 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 slaves in the U.S.

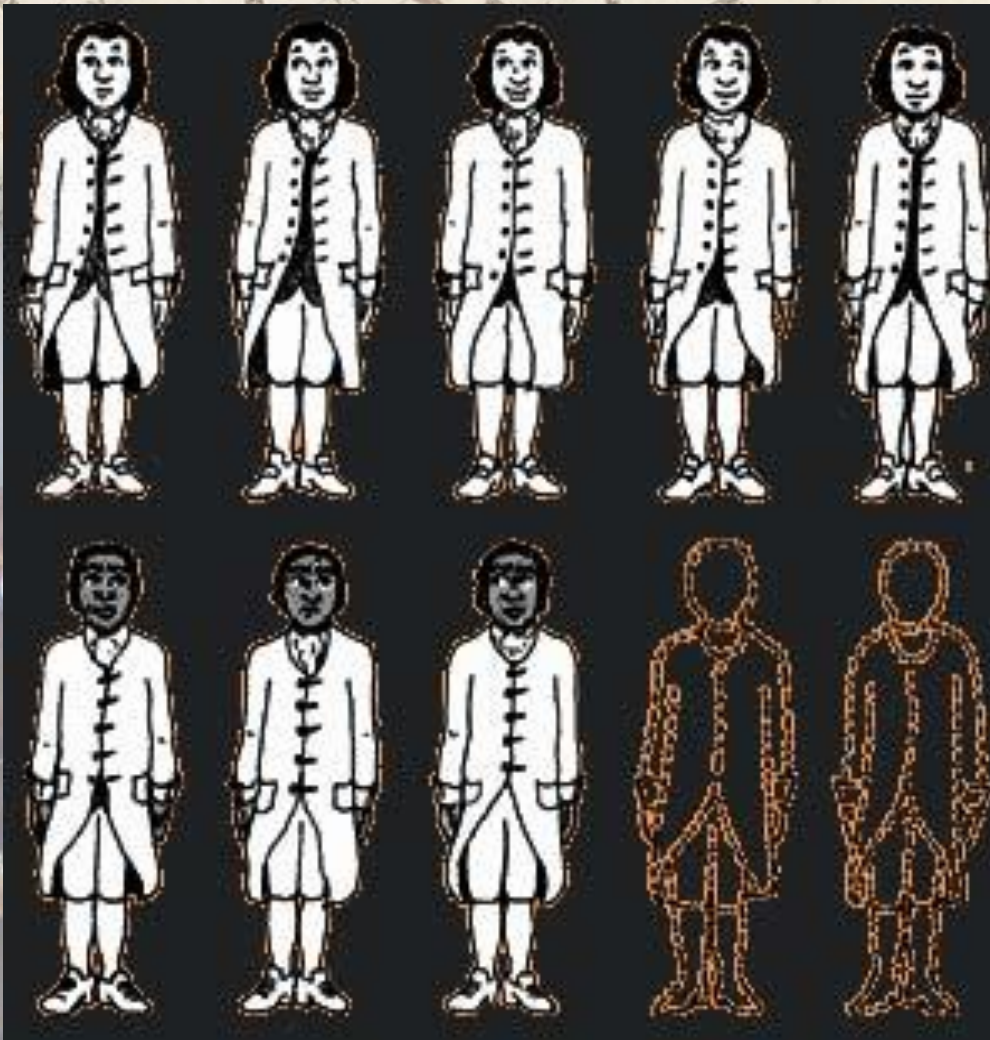
What would Southern states want?

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

One argument of Northern delegates was that since slaves 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





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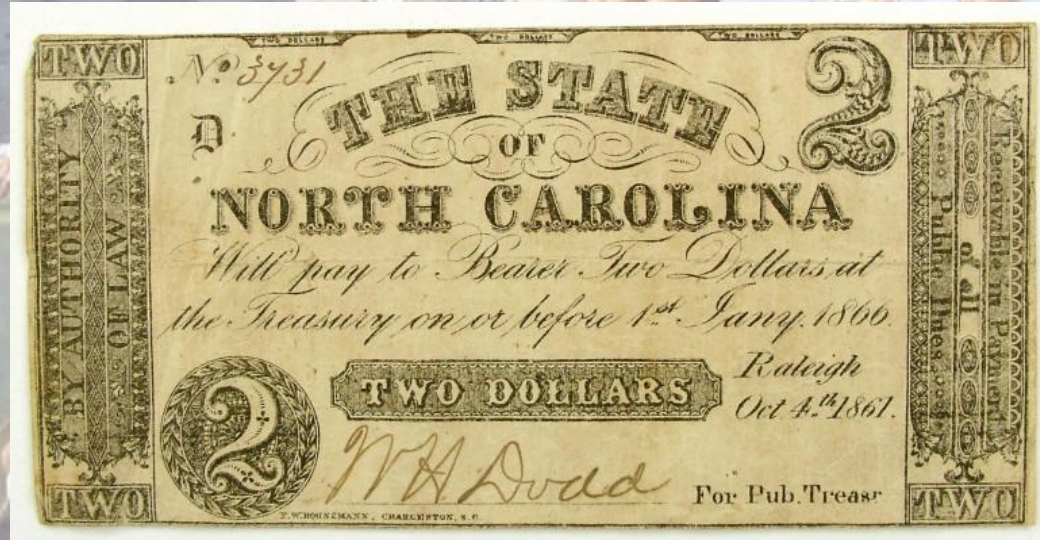


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Should a state's slaves be counted in the population for representation? Should we ban it altogether?

## 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



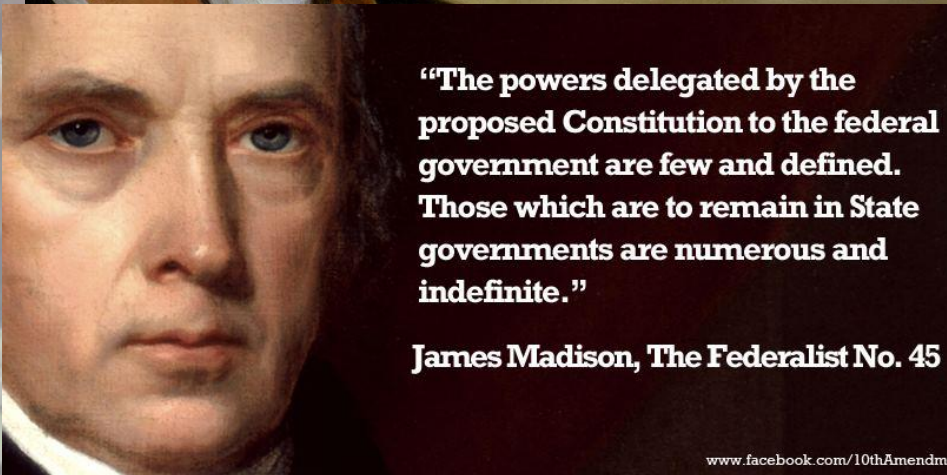
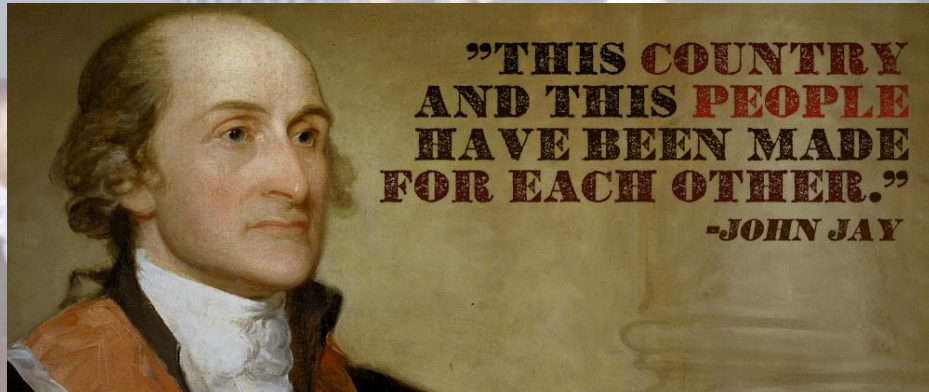


# Ratifying the U.S.C.

**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”



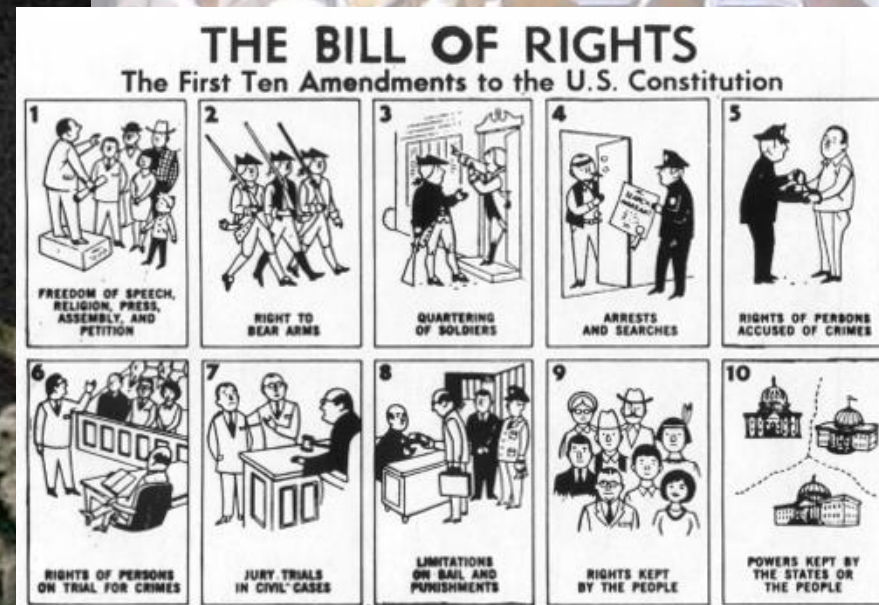
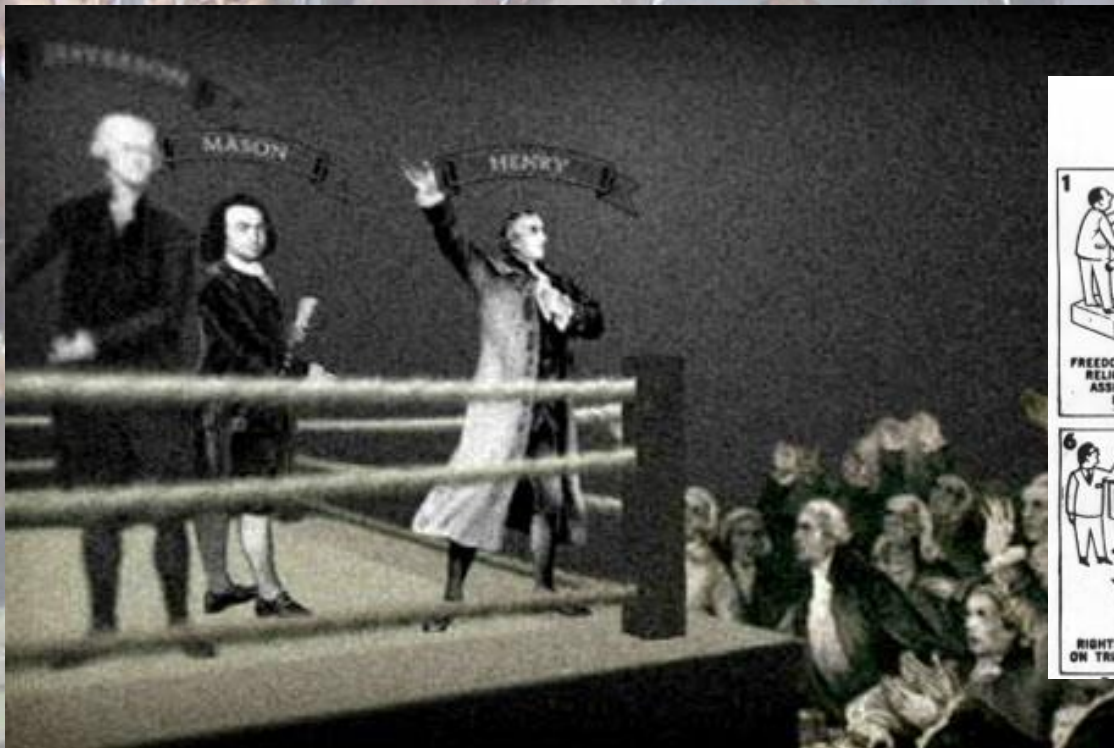


**Anti-Federalists** opposed the U.S.C. (they were against a strong national govt that the new constitution had created)

- 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