



Creating the Constitution

Constitutional Convention



- Philadelphia 1787
- Met in Secret
- Goal: Alter or abolish – fix the old system or create a new one
- Needed to “tweak” the articles

Focus of Convention

- Meeting called by government to revise the articles
 - Did not have the authority to form a whole new government
 - Many delegates thought revising would not be enough
- Voted to keep their debates secret
 - Nailed windows shut / closed the doors
 - Posted guards
 - Wanted to be free to speak their minds

Delegates

- 55 delegates
 - From 12 states
 - Rhode Island did not send delegates
- Who were the delegates
 - George Washington – Quickly elected the head of the convention
 - Alexander Hamilton – from New York, only 32, aide to Washington, brilliant in matters of economy
 - James Madison – from Virginia, took EXTENSIVE notes

The Virginia Plan

(Randolph Plan) – Edmund Randolph presented

■ Three Branches

- Legislative – make the laws
- Executive – carry out the laws
- Judicial – interpret the laws

■ Executive branch

- Necessary to correct the weakness of the Articles
- Debate - Consist of one person or a small group

■ Debate over ONE vs. THREE executives

- Three people – more easily win the people's confidence – OR ONE – can act quickly when urgent action required
- Decided on one person – Called the President

The Virginia Plan

- Two Houses
 - Lower house
 - Upper house
- Some wanted the members of the houses to be selected by the STATE legislatures
 - Suggested by Roger Sherman of Connecticut
 - People should have little to do with selecting representatives because they can be misled
- Others warn about keeping people out of process
 - James Wilson of Pennsylvania warns
 - Election of legislature by the people is cornerstone of the whole government.

- Major Conflict
- The VA Plan called for representation in both houses to be based on **population**

Large States – Support the plan	Small States – Oppose the plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would have great representation since their population was large	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wanted each state to have equal number of representatives• Keep it the same as in the Articles of Confederation

The New Jersey Plan

- One house
- With equal representation for each state

Tension high, fear convention will fail and Union will break

The Great Compromise

- Compromise – an agreement in which each side gives up something to what it wants.
 - Proposed by Roger Smith
 - Brings together large and small states
- **Two House Legislature**
 - **Lower house – House of Representatives**
 - Based on population
 - Voted in by the people
 - Two year terms
 - **Upper house – Senate**
 - Each state would have two seats
 - Chosen by state legislatures
 - Six year terms
- HAVE to get smaller states' support