



HAT: States and the Constitution

The delegates at the Constitutional Convention quickly realized that throwing out the Articles of Confederation was the best choice. The question then became – how do we replace it? Different states had different views on representation, slavery and the presidency. Which state would come out on top? Read about your state below and figure out what the people living there mainly believed.

Interact

Pennsylvania

MTT

Pennsylvania is made up of 46,055 square miles and has a population of 434,000. Few of the people living in Pennsylvania are slaves. The delegates from Pennsylvania believe the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with two houses: A House of Representatives and a Senate. Representation in both houses should be based on population. The states with more population should have greater representation in both houses.

Pennsylvania argues that the new government must be strong and unified. Individual states should not be able to disrupt national plans. The good of all must come before the good of one. With such a large population any decisions made nationally will have a huge impact on Pennsylvania so she deserves to have a larger say.

The people in Pennsylvania want to prohibit the importation of slaves. They believe it is immoral and denies the principles of liberty for which the new country stands. Slaves should be not counted for the purpose of determining representation the legislature. Slavery is immoral and if our new nation is to stand for freedom we must be rid of this awful practice.

Finally, the power of the executive should be placed in one person. A single person would feel the greatest responsibility to office. It would also be easier to control his power and to make sure he is honest. The executive would be responsible for the officers that he appoints. Pennsylvania would offer her great city of Philadelphia as the capital of this great nation and home to the new government.

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Delaware

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There are 59,000 people living in Delaware and few are slaves. The state is made up of about 1,978 square miles, which is rather small. The delegates from Delaware think the new Constitution should create one lawmaking body (legislature) in which all states are equally represented. If the new government were based on population Delaware will have only one-ninetieth of a share in the new national government. The desires of the large states may crush the small states such as Delaware whenever the small states stand in the way of the ambitions of the larger states.

The delegates are against the importation of slaves and believe that the practice of importing slaves should be stopped. The importation of slaves is immoral and denies the principles of liberty for which the new nation stands.

Since there are few slaves in Delaware, the delegates believe that slaves should not count as part of the population in determining representation in the legislature. If representation were based on population the small states such as Delaware would be at a disadvantage. And, the counting of slaves would only make the situation worse especially for states with few or no slaves. Slaves do not pay taxes or vote so they should not be counted for population. The slave owners only consider slaves as property.

Finally, more than one person should hold the executive power. A single person might easily gain too much power and become a dictator or a king. A small group of people would be safer and would represent the different parts of the country, thereby pleasing everyone.

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Maryland

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Maryland is made up of 9,874 square miles. It has a population of 320,000 people, with one-third of that number being slaves. The delegates from Maryland believe the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) in which all states have equal representation. The larger states insist that, “they never will hurt or injure the small states,” but the delegates of Maryland do not believe them. The small states fought alongside the big states in the Revolution and they deserve equal say in the new country.

The delegates from Maryland disagree with the importation of slaves. They believe that the practice should be stopped. The importation of slaves is immoral. Besides, Maryland has already prohibited the slave trade within its borders.

Maryland has many slaves and will need as many representatives as possible if representation in Congress is determined by population. If representation in the legislature is based on population, Maryland wants slaves counted as part of the population.

Finally, the delegates from Maryland believe that the executive powers should be given to more than one person under the new Constitution. A single person would be dangerous. He might easily get too much power and become a dictator or a king. A small group would be safer.

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Massachusetts

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Massachusetts is made up of 38,879 square miles and has a population of 475,000. Few of the people living in Massachusetts are slaves. The delegates from Massachusetts want the new Constitution to establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with two houses. The two Houses would have the number of representatives from each state determined by the amount of people living in each state. Since the large states will pay the most in taxes and have the largest militias, it is only fair that they have the greatest say in determining the laws of the nation.

The people in Massachusetts want to prohibit the importation of slaves. They believe it is immoral and denies the principles of liberty for which the new country stands.

Slaves should be counted for the purpose of determining representation in the legislature. Although slavery is immoral, the northern states realize that some concessions must be made to the southern states. Since slaves are part of the property of the states, which own them and are considered in taxation, they should be considered in determining representation.

Finally, the power of the executive should be placed in one person. A single person would feel the greatest responsibility to office. It would also be easier to control his power and to make sure he is honest. The executive would be responsible for the officers that he appoints.

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New Jersey

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The state of New Jersey is made up of 7,521 square miles and has a population of 184,000. Few slaves live in New Jersey. The delegates from New Jersey think that the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) where all states are equally represented. The legislature should be made up of one house. While representation by population may seem fair, it is in fact unjust and unfair. The new government could just ignore the ideas and needs of the smaller states.

The delegates believe that the importation of slaves should be prohibited. It is immoral and denies the principles of liberty for which the new nation stands.

Slaves should not be counted as population for representation purposes if representation is based on population. If representation is by population, the small states would be at a disadvantage and counting slaves would make their position worse. Slaves do not pay taxes or vote, but are considered property by those who own them. Why should they be counted? Can we count our property too for representation purposes?

Finally, the power of the executive should be placed in the hands of more than one person. A single person might easily get too much power and become a dictator. A small group would represent the different parts of the country and would be safer.

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South Carolina

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South Carolina is a large state in terms of geographic area but medium in population. The state is comprised of 30,272 square miles. It has about 250,000 people, nearly half of which are slaves. The delegates from South Carolina think the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with two houses with representatives based on the population of the state. However, South Carolina will only agree to this plan if slaves are counted in the general population counts or, perhaps, if wealth is measured as well as population.

Additionally, the delegates from South Carolina want the importation of slaves to continue. South Carolina cannot agree to any government that prohibits the importation of slaves. If this point is contested, perhaps South Carolina and the other southern states should not be part of the union.

Slaves should be included in determining population for representation purposes in the legislature. The labor of a slave in South Carolina is as productive and valuable as a freeman in Massachusetts. Because government is instituted principally for the protection of property, slaves should be counted in representation of a state.

Finally, the power of the executive should be concentrated in one person. A single person would feel the greatest responsibility to office. It is also easier to make sure he is honest. He is responsible for the officers he appoints. This would not be the case if there were several executives.

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Virginia

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Virginia is a large state. It has a population of 692,000 people. Nearly half of those are slaves. The state is made up of 39,838 square miles. The delegates from Virginia believe the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with two houses: A House of Representatives and a Senate. Representation in both houses should be based on population. The people should have a direct impact on their representatives. If every state is equal then the people are not. People come first.

Virginia argues that the new government must be strong and unified. Individual states should not be able to disrupt national plans. The good of all must come before the good of one. With such a large population any decisions made nationally will have a huge impact on Virginia so she deserves to have a larger say.

Virginia believes that the importation of slaves should be stopped. The importation of slaves is a terrible practice and already outlawed in Virginia. Slavery itself will probably end on its own if the importation of slaves is stopped now. However, they want current slaves to remain as such and be counted in the state’s population.

There should be one person in place holding the executive power. A single individual will feel the greatest allegiance to the office and it will be possible to ensure his honesty. Britain ruled us by a Parliament (group of leaders) and we dealt with their slow decisions and inability to get things done. We don’t want a repeat of that.

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Interact

Connecticut

MTT

There are 240,000 people living in Connecticut and few are slaves. The state comprises of about 5,543 square miles, which makes it the “largest” of the “small” states. The delegates from Connecticut want the new Constitution to establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with two houses. One house, the House of Representatives, would have the number of representatives from each state determined by the amount of people living in each state. The other house, the Senate, would base representation on the size of the population in each state. This way all states and people are represented fairly.

The delegates believe that the importation of slaves should be banned. It is immoral and denies the principles of liberty for which the new nation stands.

Slaves should not be counted as population for representation purposes if representation is based on population. If representation is by population, the small states would be at a disadvantage and counting slaves would make their position worse. Slaves do not pay taxes or vote, but are considered property by those who own them. Why should they be counted? Can we count our property like our homes for representation purposes?

Finally, the power of the executive should be placed in the hands of more than one person. A single person might easily get too much power and become a dictator. A small group would represent the different parts of the country and would be safer.

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Interact

North Carolina

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North Carolina is a large state in terms of geographic area and but medium in population. The state is comprised of 53,819 square miles. It has about 400,000 people, about one-fourth of which are slaves. The delegates from North Carolina think the government should have representatives based on the wealth and population of the state.

These thoughts are only valid if slaves are counted toward a state’s population. Slaves should be included in determining population for representation purposes in the legislature. Slaves need to be cared for just like anyone else. Those who argue that slaves cannot vote so they should not count for representation should consider that women and children also cannot vote but nobody argues they should not be counted. If slaves are counted for population than North Carolina would gladly accept a government based on population. If slaves are not counted then North Carolina would not accept a government based on population and would insist that all states have an equal representation.

The delegates from North Carolina want the importation of slaves to continue. North Carolina cannot agree to any government that prohibits the importation of slaves. If this point is contested, perhaps North Carolina and the other southern states should not be part of the union.

Finally, the power of the executive should be divided among 3 people. A one-man executive would be too much like a king and support his own state at the cost of the others.

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Interact

Georgia

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Georgia is a large state in terms of geographic area but rather small in population. The state is comprised of 59,425 square miles. It has about 82,000 people, about one-third of which are slaves. The delegates from Georgia think the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with two houses. Representation in these houses should be based on the wealth of the state. Whoever contributes the most should have the greatest voice, right?

Additionally, the delegates from Georgia want the importation of slaves to continue. Georgia cannot agree to any government that prohibits the importation of slaves. If this point is contested, perhaps Georgia and the other southern states should not be part of the union.

Slaves should be included in determining wealth for representation purposes in the legislature. The labor of a slave in Georgia is as productive and valuable as a freeman in Massachusetts. Since government is instituted principally for the protection of property, slaves should be counted in representation of a state.

Finally, the power of the executive should be concentrated in one person. A single person would feel the greatest responsibility to office. It is also easier to make sure he is honest. He is responsible for the officers he appoints. This would not be the case if there were several executives. Additionally, we would like to see the capital moved from Philadelphia. Too much power is concentrated in the Northern states and the capital should be located further south.

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New York

MTT

New York is made up of 54,556 square miles and has a population of 340,000. Approximately 20,000 of the people living in New York are slaves. The delegates from New York believe the new Constitution should establish a lawmaking body (legislature) with one house: the House of Representatives. Representation should be based on population. The states with more population should have greater representation. The large states pay most of the taxes and have the largest militias, so it is only fair that they have a greater say in determining the direction of the country.

New York argues that the new government must be strong and unified. Individual states should not be able to disrupt national plans. The good of all must come before the good of one. With such a large population any decisions made nationally will have a huge impact on New York so she deserves to have a larger say.

Slaves should be not counted for the purpose of determining representation the legislature. Slaves do not own property and therefore should not be represented in the government.

Finally, the power of the executive should be placed in one person. A single person would feel the greatest responsibility to office. It would also be easier to control his power and to make sure he is honest. The executive would be responsible for the officers that he appoints. New York proudly offers our glorious New York City as a home for this new government.

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Interact

New Hampshire

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There are 141,000 people living in New Hampshire and few are slaves. The state comprises of about 2,491 square miles, which is rather small. The delegates from New Hampshire think the new Constitution should create one lawmaking body (legislature) in which all states are equally represented. The delegates fear that representation based on population will leave their state powerless. Their small neighbor, Rhode Island, so fears a national government trampling on their rights that they have refused to even attend this convention.

The delegates are against the importation of slaves and believe that the practice of importing slaves should be stopped. The importation of slaves is immoral and denies the principles of liberty for which the new nation stands.

Since there are few slaves in New Hampshire, the delegates believe that slaves should not count as part of the population in determining representation in the legislature. Slaves do not pay taxes or vote so they should not be counted for population. The slave owners only consider slaves as property.

Finally, more than one person should hold the executive power. A single person might easily gain too much power and become a dictator or a king – especially if that person came from a large state like Pennsylvania or Virginia. A small group of people would be safer and would represent the different parts of the country, thereby pleasing everyone.

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