

1. HOW SHOULD THE STATES BE REPRESENTED IN THE NATIONAL LEGISLATURE?

Position A:

“As all authority is derived from the people, equal numbers of people ought to have equal numbers of representatives. This principle was improperly violated in the Confederation, owing to the urgent circumstances of the time.”

-James Wilson, Pennsylvania

“Whatever reason might have existed for the equality of suffrage when the Union was a federal one among sovereign states, it must cease when a national government is put in place. There is the same reasons for different numbers of representatives from different states as from counties of different populations within particular states.”

-James Madison, Virginia

2. WHICH PART OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE THE POWER TO DECLARE WAR?

Position A:

“I am opposed to giving the power of war to the executive, because the executive cannot be safely trusted with it. The Senate alone is not constructed as to be entitled to exercise this power. I am for clogging rather than facilitating war.”

-George Mason, Virginia

“I never expected to hear in a republic a motion to empower the Executive alone to declare war.”

-Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts

3. SHOULD SLAVES BE COUNTED IN DETERMINING REPRESENTATION?

Position A:

“Blacks must be included in the rule of representation equally with whites. The labor of a slave man in South Carolina is as productive and valuable as that of a freeman in Massachusetts. Since wealth is the great means of defense and utility to the nation, the slaves are equally valuable to it with freemen. Consequently, an equal representation ought to be allowed for them.”

-Pierce Butler, South Carolina

“Slaves are valuable, they raise the value of the land, increase the exports and imports, supply revenue and the means of feeding and supporting an army. They ought not to be excluded from the estimate of representation.”

-George Mason, Virginia

4. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ABOUT THE SLAVE TRADE?

Position A

“Slavery is the curse of heaven on the state where it prevails. Compare the free regions of the middle states where a rich and noble cultivation marks the prosperity and happiness of the people, with the misery and poverty which overspread the barren wastes of Virginia, Maryland, and the other states having slaves. The inhabitants of Georgia and South Carolina go to the coast of Africa and in defiance of the most sacred laws of humanity tear away their fellow creatures from their dearest connections. Domestic slavery is the most prominent feature in the aristocratic countenance of the proposed Constitution. The vassalage of the poor has ever been the favorite offspring of aristocracy.

-Governour Morris, Pennsylvania