

Federalists v. Anti-Federalists; A Comparison of Positions c.1786-1791

<u>ISSUE / TOPIC</u>	<u>FEDERALIST POSITION</u>	<u>ANTI-FEDERALIST POSITION</u>
A Constitution establishing a strong central government	Favor	Opposed
Articles of Confederation	Opposed the Articles as ineffective as a governing document; Believed it was too poorly constructed to be fixed, and that a completely new governing document (the Constitution) was necessary to fix the government.	Believed the Articles of Confederation simply needed to be amended in order to repair it, not abandoned altogether. *Did not rule out a centralized government; some believed that sovereignty of the people could be transferred to a government following a Lockean-style revolution.
Power of Thirteen states	Favored limiting state power A strong national government was needed to control uncooperative states.	States should enjoy strong power and influence, which in turn would support the central government Local control was key to the Anti-Federalist concept of Democracy. *Concerns about Federalist position: states would lose influence with the growth of government's power Argued against a two-thirds ratification plan Articles of Confederation required unanimous consent
Governmental Representation	Large states argued they should have more power, while small states argued for equality. The compromise which all Federalists supported argued that the Senate (with two representatives per state) and the House of Representatives (the number of representatives reflecting the population) adequately represented state interests Term limits: depending on the position, 2 (House), 4 (President) or 6 (Senate) year terms. Men of experience and talent should govern the nation. "Mobocracy" threatened security of life and property.	Favored one representative per state, as this demonstrated state equality Term limits: annual voting allows for accountability and citizen voices, anti-Federalists argued. *Concerns about Federalist position: the longer in power, the more likely it may be abused and corruption happens. Strong national government threatened the rights of the common people *Concerns about Federalist position: with the aristocratic elements at its founding, just how representative with the House of Representatives really be? Suspected a sinister plot to suppress liberty of the masses.
Bill of Rights	Not necessary. Constitution and state governments protected individual freedoms without a Bill of Rights Since people could take back delegated power to the government (through amendment or vote), there was no risk that the national government would overreach. To create a list of all possible human rights would be an exhausting exercise, and one which would inevitably leave out rights which should be included.	Necessary to protect the rights of the individual. Anti-Federalists argued that any reliance upon politicians to protect individual rights (as Federalists maintain) is risky, as politicians may remove such liberties unless the law prevents them from doing so.
Role of Religion	More sympathetic to separation of church and state	Opposed to the omission of any reference to God
Role of Taxation	A reliable flow of revenue is necessary for the funding of governmental operations, but it should be done with moderation and decided upon by representatives of states.	Reluctant to support any power to tax at the federal level. The revolution was, at its heart, a resistance to unfair taxation. Paying taxes from the states to the federal government should remain voluntary (as it was under the Articles)
Role of Slavery	The Constitution allowed slavery to continue where it existed and even validated its existence at the time, although ambiguous wording was introduced which could one day bring about its end.	The Articles remain silent on the topic of slavery.
Size of the Nation	A large republic was seen as the best protection for individual freedoms	Only a small republic could protect rights *Concern about Federalist position: No experiment in democracy on this scale had ever been attempted!
Supporters	Well-educated and propertied class. Most lived in settled areas along the Atlantic Ocean seaboard. Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, John Hancock, James Madison, George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson (post-1801)	State rights advocates, backcountry farmers, poor farmers, the ill-educated and illiterate, debtors and paper money advocates. In general, the poorer classes of society. (And a very few wealthy farmers also) Thomas Jefferson (pre-1801), Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee, George Mason, Randolph, Elbridge Gerry, Roger Sherman, Patrick Henry