

Lesson 16

What Was the Anti-Federalists' Position in the Debate about Ratification?

Anti-Federalists

- The people who opposed ratification of the Constitution.
- Position based on classical republicanism
- Main concern: No Bill of Rights

Terms to Know

- Agrarian community- small farming communities (everyone knows everyone)
- Anti-Federalists- Fear of strong national government
- Diverse community- many differences; pluralism (local interests sacrificed)

Arguments of Anti-Federalists

- Meetings had been closed to the public
- Undermine republican government
- Too much power to the national government
- Executive branch too powerful
- Congress too much power (necessary & proper clause)
- Did not adequately separate powers of Executive & Legislative branches.
- Allowed the national government to keep an army during peacetime.
- NO BILL OF RIGHTS

Anti-Federalists...Why the fear?

- Constitution created by an elite & privileged group to serve their own self-interests.
 - Only local government closely linked to the people could be trusted
 - Yearly elections

Should there be a bill of rights?

- Only the House of Representatives is directly elected by the people.
- Powers too general & vague (“necessary & proper” and “general welfare”)
- Many rights are omitted from the Constitution (does this mean government may violate them?)
- A bill of rights would quiet the fears of many Americans who recently fought to secure them
- A bill of rights is necessary to remind the people of the principles of our political system.

How did the demand for a bill of rights unite the Anti-Federalists?

- Anti-Federalists were not well organized
 - Did agree they opposed the new government, but for different reasons
 - Best way to defeat ratification was to focus on the lack of a bill of rights
- Wanted a second constitutional convention where the Anti-Federalists hoped to be more organized

Reviewing & Using the Lesson 16:

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| <p>1. What objections & concerns did Anti-Federalists have with regard to the Constitution drafted at the Philadelphia Convention?</p> | |
| <p>2. What arguments did the Anti-Federalists make with regard to the need for a bill of rights?</p> | |
| <p>3. How did the Anti-Federalists use the ideas of classical republicanism to support their position?</p> | |
| <p>Summary:</p> | |