

## Federalists and Anti-Federalists

The creation of the Constitution entailed hours of debate and compromise, and even when it was completed, some delegates were unhappy with it. The task of fixing the ailing Confederate government was not complete yet; each state had to ratify, or approve, the Constitution. Basically, people divided into two groups, the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. Each of their viewpoints is worth examining, as they both have sound reasoning.

The Anti-Federalists did not want to ratify the Constitution. Basically, they argue that:

- It gave too much power to the national government at the expense of the state governments.
- There was no bill of rights.
- The national government could maintain an army in peacetime.
- Congress, because of the 'necessary and proper clause,' wielded too much power.
- The executive branch held too much power.

Of these complaints, the lack of a bill of rights was the most effective. The American people had just fought a war to defend their rights, and they did not want a intimidating national government taking those rights away again. The lack of a bill of rights was the focus of the Anti-Federalist campaign against ratification.

The Federalists, on the other hand, had answers to all of the Anti-Federalist complaints. Among them:

- The separation of powers into three independent branches protected the rights of the people. Each branch represents a different aspect of the people, and because all three branches are equal, no one group can assume control over another.
- A listing of rights can be a dangerous thing. If the national government were to protect specific listed rights, what would stop it from violating rights other than the listed ones? Since we can't list all the rights, the Federalists argued that it's better to list none at all.



Overall, the Federalists were more organized in their efforts. By June of 1788, the Constitution was close to ratification. Nine states had ratified it, and only one more (New Hampshire) was needed. To achieve this, the Federalists agreed that once Congress met, it would draft a bill of rights. Finally, New York and Virginia approved, and the Constitution was a reality. Interestingly, the Bill of Rights was not originally a part of the Constitution, and yet it has proved to be highly important to protecting the rights of the people.