

The Constitutional Convention

Chapter 2 section 4

I. The Convention Begins

- A. The delegates to the Constitutional Convention had great practical experience in politics and government and included many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation.
- B. George Washington was elected as leader of the convention. Benjamin Franklin, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton were among the 55 delegates at the convention.



I. The Convention Begins

- B. The delegates held their meetings in secret, deciding each state would have one vote, all decisions would be by majority vote, and a quorum of seven states was required for all meetings.



I. The Convention Begins

- C. The delegates decided to give up the idea of revising the Articles of Confederation and to draft a new plan of government about which they shared many ideas.



II. Decisions and Compromises

A. The Virginia Plan proposed a strong executive, a national judiciary, and a strong two-house legislature in which the number representatives in the lower house would be based on the population and the upper house would be chosen by the lower house. This plan favored the large, more populous states.



Current justices on the US Supreme Court

Nominated by Republican president



John Roberts



Samuel Alito



Clarence Thomas



Neil Gorsuch



Brett Kavanaugh



Amy Coney Barrett

Nominated by Democratic president



Stephen Breyer



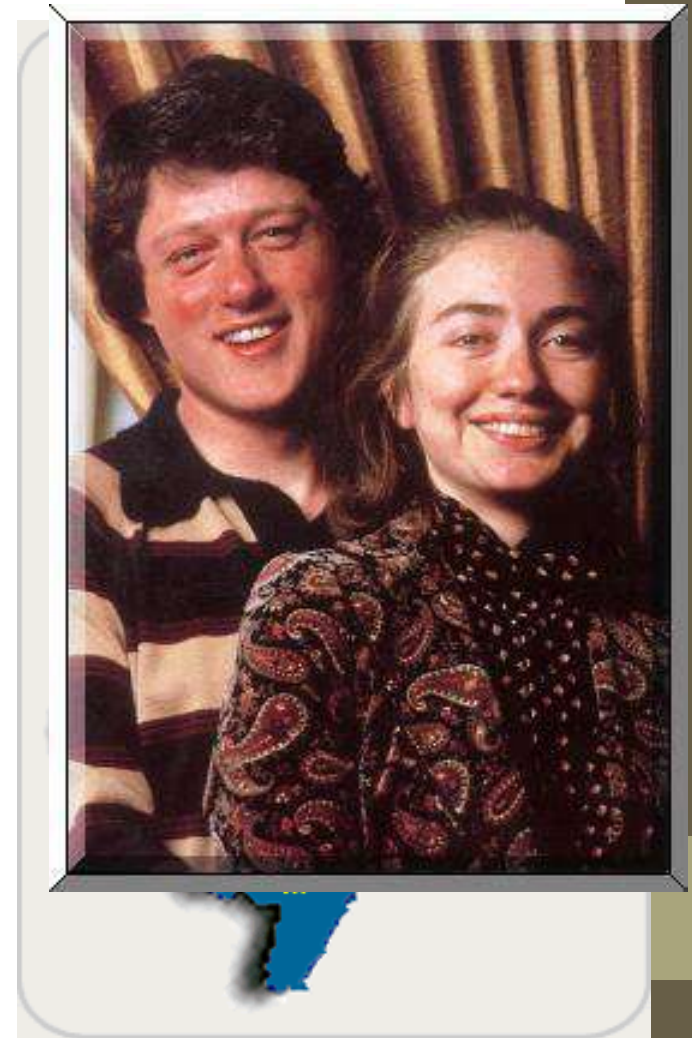
Elena Kagan



Sonia Sotomayor

II. Decisions and Compromises

- B. The New Jersey Plan proposed a weak executive of more than one person elected by Congress, a national judiciary with limited powers, and a one-house legislature, with one vote for each state. This plan favored small states.



II. Decisions and Compromises

- C. A special committee devised the Connecticut Compromise, which proposed a legislative branch with two parts: a House of Representatives with state representation based on population and a Senate with two members from each state, regardless of size. This compromise gave the large states an advantage in the House and protected the smaller states in the Senate.



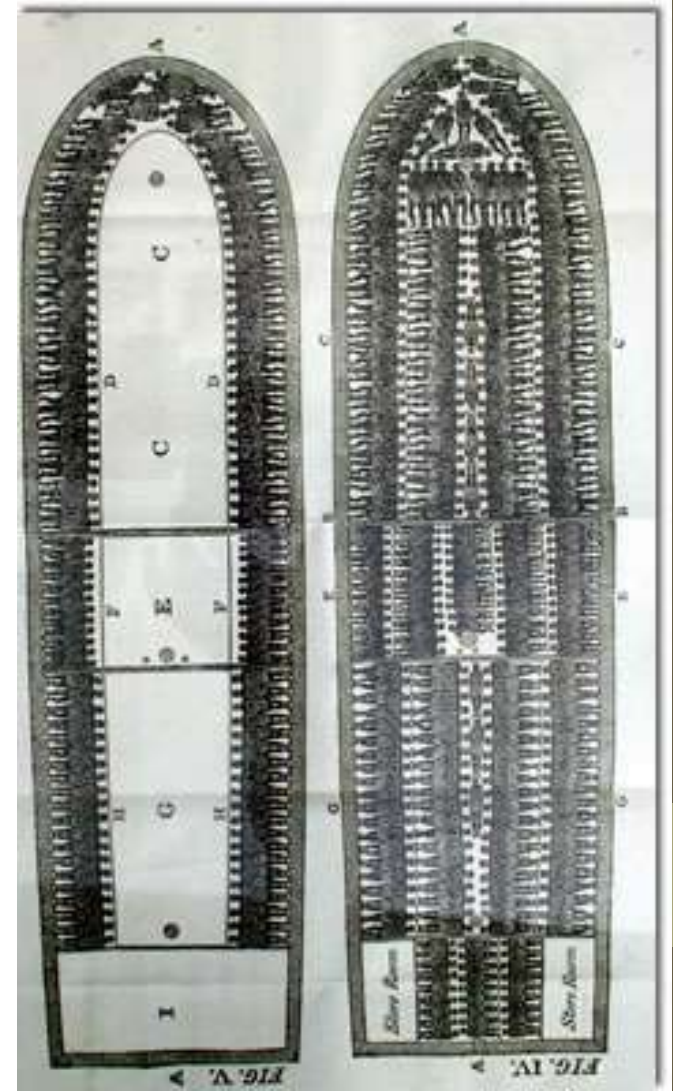
II. Decisions and Compromises

- D. The Three-Fifths Compromise settled the issue of representation in the House of Representatives, counting three-fifths of enslaved Africans in determining the number of a state's representatives.



II. Decisions and Compromises

- E. The Commerce and Slave Trade Compromise allowed the slave trade to continue until 1808. Congress was forbidden to tax exports and was granted power to regulate both interstate commerce and trade with other nations.



II. Decisions and Compromises

F. Although many Northern delegates wanted to end slavery, they realized that if they insisted on doing so, the Southern states would never accept the Constitution and the nation would face an uncertain future. Thus, the Founders compromised and refused to deal with slavery in the Constitution.



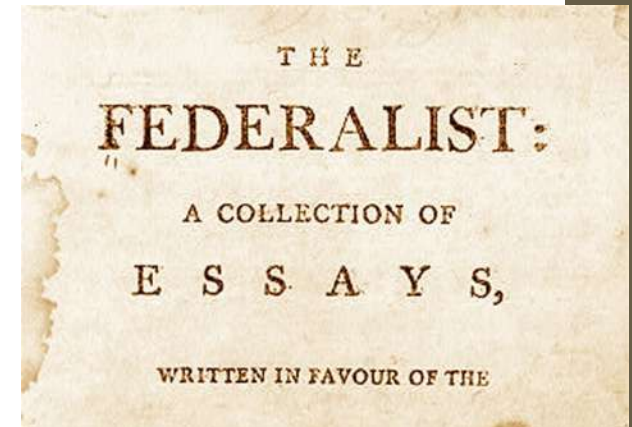
II. Decisions and Compromises

- G. The delegates agreed to other compromises as well, including a four-year term for the president and an Electoral College rather than a direct election of the president.



III. Ratifying the Constitution

- A. Supporters and opponents of the Constitution began a great debate over whether to accept it or reject it.
- B. The Federalists, like James Madison, who urged ratification argued that a strong national government was needed to solve the nation's problems and to deal with foreign countries. Without a Constitution, disorder or anarchy would undermine the nation.



III. Ratifying the Constitution

- C. The Anti-Federalists, like Patrick Henry, who opposed ratification argued that the delegates who drafted the Constitution did so in secret and had been given no power to replace the Articles. They contended that the Constitution took important powers away from the states and lacked a Bill of Rights.
- D. When the Federalists promised to add a Bill of Rights, and the small states learned more about the Connecticut Compromise, the battle over ratification was finally won.
- E. The new national government was launched in 1789 when Congress met for the first time in New York City. Soon after George Washington took the oath of office as president of the United States.



In your notebooks

- List and give a brief explanation of each of the three main compromises.