Arguments for and Against the Constitution

RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

APPROVING THE CONSTITUTION

Article VII - Ratification

WORDS WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND

- Ratification – the act of giving formal approval or consent to
- Convention – a meeting or formal assembly, as of representatives or delegates, for discussion of and action on particular matters of common concern.

RATIFICATION IN 1787 & EARLY 1788

- Delaware, December 7, 1787 (30-0)
- Pennsylvania, December 12, 1787 (46-23)
- New Jersey, December 18, 1787 (38-0)
- Georgia, January 2, 1788 (26-0)
- Connecticut, January 9, 1788 (128-40)
- Massachusetts, February 6, 1788 (187-168)

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

- New Hampshire ratifies June 21, 1788 making the Constitution officially the new government, but...
- Big fight in both New York and Virginia, the 2 largest states (population), over ratification
- Each convention has large groups of Anti-Federalist delegates
**ANTI CONSTITUTION - ANTIFEDERALIST**

- Antifederalists opposed ratification because there was no bill of rights
- Patrick Henry had refused to attend the Constitutional Convention
- Leading patriot from Revolution
- Led the fight against ratification in Virginia

**George Mason**

Wrote the Virginia Declaration of Rights (Virginia's version of the bill of rights) in 1776
- Attended the Constitutional Convention but refused to sign the final document
- Because no list of the rights of people was included

**Patrick Henry**

“*I smell a rat*”

**Patrick Henry**

“*I smell a rat*”

**Opposition to the Constitution**

**The Anti-Federalist Papers**

- Published starting in October 1787
- 85 total essays published anonymously under the name PUBLIUS in New York
- Intended to gain support from ratification delegates to New York convention
- Federalists argued that the Constitution was structured to protect the rights of the people

**THE FEDERALIST PAPERS**

- Book form published in 1788
- Scholars believe that Hamilton wrote 52, Madison wrote 28, and Jay 5 of the essays
- Still used today to explain what the writers of the Constitution meant

**PRO CONSTITUTION - FEDERALISTS**

- Alexander Hamilton
- James Madison
- John Jay

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CONFLICT COMES TO AN END

- Federalists agree to amend Constitution and include a Bill of Rights in order to gain Antifederalist support
- Virginia ratifies June 26, 1788
- New York ratifies July 26, 1788
- George Washington becomes the nation’s 1st president April 30, 1789
- North Carolina ratifies November 21, 1789
- Rhode Island ratifies May 29, 1790

THE BILL OF RIGHTS

- 1791 – first ten amendments to the constitution were created as the “Bill of Rights”
- Amendment Process
  - Proposed in Congress
  - 2/3 Congress vote yes
  - ¾ state legislatures vote yes = APPROVED