A Nation Founded on Compromise: From the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution

Choose your Government, America!

Central Government

The central government is superior to the subunits and is the governing unit.

EX: Absolute Monarchy, Dictatorship

Subunits are superior to and control the central government.

EX: Articles of Confederation, Confederate States of America, European Union

The subunits and central government share equal power.

EX: Roman Republic

Powers Granted by the Articles of Confederation

- Congress could declare war
- Congress could raise armies
- Congress could sign treaties

Powers Withheld by the Articles of Confederation

- Congress could not raise revenue through taxes
- Congress could not regulate trade and collect tariffs
Problems of Confederation

- In your assigned groups, decide on a single problem or issue facing our country/state/town today that you want to change.
- Prepare a short speech (30 sec to a minute) that summarizes why other groups should vote for your issue.
- Each assembly (group) will be allowed ONE VOTE PER GROUP, and you can only vote for ONE issue.
- Your goal is to get UNANIMOUS VOTING for your issue. If your issue passes, then your group (and only your group) gets extra credit! (*Note: You don't have to vote for other group's issues, and you can certainly block theirs from passing if you wish).

The 2nd American Revolution, 1787-88

- Several states in the union owe a substantial war debt to France for the American Revolution, while others have no war debt. Other nations also are have trouble trading with states because each state uses its own currency and has its own trade regulations. The economic crisis created by these problems is debilitating our states. What should we do to change this situation?

Attempts at reform

- Sale of lands = pay debts
- Est’d. process of becoming state
- Line b/t freedom & slavery (Ohio River)
- Post-war attempts at
  - Gov’t’s role = (let it be)
  - Depression in Massachusetts (1780s)
The 2nd American Revolution, 1787-88

Group 1: You are a farmer in Massachusetts that is oppressed by taxes imposed upon you by the wealthy aristocrats in the Massachusetts assembly. You have tried asking for relief from taxes, and even asked if you could pay your taxes by paying in crops, all of which has been refused. If you cannot pay your debt/taxes, you are thrown into a debtor’s prison. What do you propose we do?

Group 2: You are a group of wealthy business men and politicians in Boston who serve in the state government. You have a crippling war debt to pay back, our currency is devalued because of economic depression, we have growing unemployment concerns, and poor farmers are refusing to pay their taxes. What do you propose we do about these problems?

Shays Rebellion

Armory at Springfield (Jan 1787)

Response:

Philadelphia, 1787 — reform Articles of Confederation

Assembly ENTIRELY elite members

Should we have a strong Federal Government and restrict the voice of the people?

“It is time to clip the wings of a mad democracy”

“These who own the country ought to govern it.”

Should we have a strong State Government and restrict the role of the powerful elite and Federal Govt?

“Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories.”

“The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants”
Real liberty is neither found in despotism or the extremes of democracy, but in moderate governments.
What are the strengths of the Federalist beliefs?
What are the strengths of the Anti-Federalist beliefs?
Which one do you agree with more?

Real liberty is neither found in despotism or the extremes of democracy, but in moderate governments.

Our country is now taking so steady a course as to show by what road it will pass to destruction: by consolidation of power first, and then corruption, its necessary consequence.

How do we fix the Articles of Confederation?

Competing Plans:
- Virginia Plan — strong Nat’l Govt (Federalist)
- Sovereign state govs. with strong Federal Govt.
- Branches of Govt = Legislative, Executive, Judicial
  - 2 houses
- New Jersey Plan — strong State Govt. (Anti-Federalist)
- Strengthen Articles of Confederation
  - 1 house
- Strong Federal Govt
- Govt involved in planning the economy
- Senators and President elected for life

“The Great Compromise” — combines BOTH w/

Bicameral Nat’l Legislature —
- Elected by
  - Impeachment possible — Why?
- Lifetime appointment — Why?
- Head count every 10 years — Representation
“The Great Compromise”

- Big compromise on
  - Federalists —
  - Anti-Feds —
  - Compromise:
    - SOUTH —
      - Slaves = 3/5 of a person
      - Reason? —
    - NORTH — end to EXTERNAL slave trade, BUT not for another 20 years
    - SOUTH — Promise of
      - Return of fugitive slaves
      - Constitution protects slavery where it exists; but can it move elsewhere?

Ratification of the Constitution

— need 3/4 (9) states
  - Federalist Papers —
    - Importance of Union —
    - Problems of Confederation — states should be subordinate
    - Function of Gov —
      - Result? — Sways opinion toward Ratification
      - Const. ratified June 1788

A School for and by the People?

◆ Write up a list of 5 Amendments to the School “Constitution” that you would like to make as legal mandates to protect student rights at BCCHS. You will present those to the people and vote to pass ONE of your five.