"We, the People v. We, the States": The Virginia Ratifying Convention
High School Script

ACT I: *The calling for the* ***ratify****ing convention; the election of officers and the rules of debate are agreed to, delegates debate on the Preamble, and Article I.*
("The Newspaper Boy" posts and distributes the broadside "Virginia, to wit:")

Narrator 1

On December 12, 1787, word came from the General Assembly in Virginia that delegates were to be selected for a convention the following June. These delegates were to meet in order to ratify or reject the newly created Constitution.

Narrator 2

When the 168 delegates to the Virginia Constitution Ratification Convention arrived in Richmond in June 1788, the future of the Constitution was in doubt. Ratification depended on the approval of nine of the thirteen states.

Narrator 3

While eight states had approved the new system of government, of the remaining five, North Carolina and Rhode Island were not going to sign, leaving the fate of the new government up to Virginia, New York, or New Hampshire. The **Federalists** and the **Anti-Federalists** were evenly split in New Hampshire, and the Anti-Federalists outnumbered the Federalists in New York by nearly 2 to 1.

Narrator 4

In Virginia the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists were also evenly split, and the debate promised to be intense as the delegates in Richmond included some of the nation's leading political thinkers. The Federalists were led by James Madison, primary author of the Constitution, and other leading Virginia politicians including Edmund Pendleton, George Nicholas, John Marshall, and George Wythe.

Narrator 5

The Anti-Federalists were led by Patrick Henry, nationally famous from before the Revolutionary War, and George Mason, who publicly refused to sign the Constitution and immediately began working against its ratification. William Grayson and future President James Monroe were also prominent Anti-Federalists.

Narrator 1

Questions surrounded Virginia Governor Edmund Randolph: he sided with Mason in Philadelphia and refused to sign the Constitution, but there were rumors that he had changed his mind and now sided with the Federalists.

Narrator 2

These Virginia delegates clearly understood the importance of the situation as they gathered in the state capitol and prepared to debate the merits of the constitution for more than three weeks.

Talk about pressure. I wouldn't want to be in their shoes. Would you?

Narrator 3

Look—they are gathering now. The date is June 2, 1788. One of the first actions taken was to elect Edmund Pendleton as president of the convention. Next, after some debate, the delegates set a number of ground rules. The most important came out of an agreement by two leaders—Mason for the Anti-Federalists and Madison for the Federalists. They agreed that the constitution was to be read and fully discussed "clause by clause" in the "Committee of the Whole."

Narrator 4

They actually began debating on June 4. For nearly two weeks the debate centered on the **Preamble** and Article I, with particular focus on sections 1 and 2, which dealt with the origins of the Constitution, the powers granted to Congress, and the issues of taxation and representation as it related to the House of Representatives.

Let's listen in to their discussion now.

. . .

Edmund Pendleton

We are met together on this Solemn Occasion as Trustees for a Great People, the Citizens of Virginia, to deliberate and decide upon a Plan proposed for the Government of the United States.

Patrick Henry

The public mind, as well as my own, is extremely uneasy at the proposed change of Government. Who authorized the Philadelphia delegates to use the language of *We, the People,* instead of *We, the States*? States are the actors in a **confederation**. This language is a clear indication that this proposal government represents a drastic change in government. The people gave them no power to use their name. That they exceeded their power is perfectly clear.

Governor Edmund Randolph

In Philadelphia I refused to sign this constitution, and if the circumstances were the same, I would again refuse. The Gentleman [*pointing at Patrick Henry*] inquires, why we used the language of *We, the People*. I ask why not? The Government is for the people; and the misfortune was that the people had no **agency** in the Government before. I have always acted in what I believe to be my duty to my country. I refused to sign before, but with eight states already supporting the constitution, a vote against it is a vote against the Union. I am a friend to the Union.

George Mason

It is clear that the proposed government is totally different than any system that has previously governed us. The right to tax the people clearly makes this system a national government with the power to totally **annihilate** the State Governments. These two powers cannot exist long together; the one will destroy the other. The question then will be whether a consolidated Government can preserve the freedom and secure the great rights of the people. I wish for such amendments and such only as are necessary to secure the dearest rights of the people.

Edmund Pendleton

The expression *We, the People* is thought improper. Permit me to ask the Gentleman [*indicate Patrick Henry*] who made this objection, who but the people can delegate powers? Who but the people have a right to form Government? The proposed plan for Government is far better than the Articles of Confederation to serve this country's needs.

Patrick Henry

It is said eight States have adopted this plan. I declare that if twelve States and a half had adopted it, I would still reject it.

If I may, I would like to outline my problems with the proposed form of government: As I previously mentioned, the Preamble is ordained by *We, the People*, and not *We, the States*. This constitution departs too far from the previously adopted Articles of Confederation, and as a result, I still firmly believe that the delegates in Philadelphia exceeded their authority. I fear that the rights of the people are not properly protected by a bill of rights. And contrary to our established laws, the people of Virginia will be unable to change their form of government, because under this plan they will now be tied to the people of all of the other states. If all of Virginia's delegates are against taxation, Virginians may still be taxed based upon the votes of other states.

I have, I fear, fatigued the Committee, yet I have not said the one hundred thousandth part of what I have on my mind and wish to impart.

Governor Edmund Randolph *(in a state of frustration and exhaustion)*

Mr. Chairman—If we go on in this irregular manner, contrary to our resolution, instead of three to six weeks, it will take us six months to decide this question!

Our safety, our political happiness, and our existence depend on the Union of the States. As such, I will vote for the adoption of the constitution. I believe that this proposed form of government secures the ideals for which we fought the Revolutionary War. I believe that there are real dangers under our current form of government, and that the Articles of Confederation are damaged beyond repair. The constitution will provide us with the necessary national government.

If the Union be now lost, I fear it will remain so forever.

When I maturely weigh the advantages of the Union (*gesturing with right hand)*, against the consequences of its **dissolution** (*gesturing with left hand)*—when I see safety on my right, and destruction on my left—I cannot hesitate to decide in favor of the former.

James Madison *(speaking so low that it is difficult to hear him)*

We should be focused on the merits of the constitution itself, and its ability to promote happiness and security for Americans. If there are dangers in this system, let us plainly and clearly examine them. Contrary to the claims of Mr. Henry, Americans do not now live a state of "perfect **tranquility** and safety."

The constitution is an entirely new form of government, unlike any before it. The power of taxation is an essential one for a government to guarantee the security of its people, and it would be in the best interest of the government to use it only when necessary.

The power of raising and supporting armies is called both dangerous and unnecessary. I wish that it was not necessary. But suppose a foreign nation were to declare war against the United States. Must not the general Legislature have the power of defending the country?

George Nicholas

Mr. Henry has entertained us with the unnecessary and dangerous nature of the constitutional powers; but his argument appears to me inconclusive and inaccurate. It is necessary to give powers to a certain extent to any Government. If they be too small, the Government will decay away—If too extensive, the people must be oppressed. As there can be no liberty without Government, it must be as dangerous to make powers too limited as too great.

Governor Edmund Randolph

What could the General Government do without the power to levy taxes in order to raise money? I beg the friends of the Union to consider the necessity of this power—Without it we may abandon the Government altogether—It is the soul of the Government.

James Madison (*soft spoken, other delegates straining to hear)*

What will render us secure and happy at home, and what will render us respectably abroad? If we be free and happy at home, *we shall be* respectable abroad. We have been obliged

to borrow money, even to pay off the interest of our debts. Is this a situation on which America can rely for security and happiness?

Patrick Henry

The power of direct taxation was called by the Honorable Gentleman [*Edmund Randolph*] the soul of the Government: Another Gentleman called it the lungs of the Government. We all agree that it is the most important part of the body politic. If the power of raising money be necessary for the General Government, it is no less so for the States. If money be so vital to Congress, is it not precious for those individuals from whom it is to be taken? Must I give my soul—my lungs, to Congress? Congress must have our souls. The State must have our souls. This is dishonorable and disgraceful.

James Monroe

What are the powers which the Federal Government ought to have? There are some that belong to the Federal, and others I believe should be left to the State Governments. The Federal Government should have control over the national affairs; the States should take care of the local interests. Neither the Confederation, nor this constitution, make this division properly. I am strongly impressed with the necessity of having a firm national Government, but I am decidedly against giving it the power of direct taxation; because I think it endangers our liberties.

I am a decided and warm friend to a Bill of Rights—the polar star, and great supporter of American liberty; and I am clearly of opinion that the general powers outlined in the constitution should be guarded and checked by a Bill of Rights. Upon reviewing this plan, I must say, under my present impression, I think it is a dangerous Government, and calculated to secure neither the interests, nor the rights of our countrymen.

John Marshall

The friends of the constitution value liberty as much as its enemies. They wish to give no power that will endanger it. They wish to give the government powers to secure and protect it. Our inquiry here must be whether the power of taxation is necessary to perform the objects of the constitution, and whether it is safe to grant this power. The prosperity and happiness of the people depend on the performance of these great and important duties of the general government. Can these duties be performed by one state? Can one state protect us, and promote our

happiness? The honorable gentleman who has gone before me [*pointing to Governor Randolph*] has shown that Virginia cannot do these things. How, then, can they be done? By the national government only. Shall we refuse to give it power to do them?

George Nicholas

We have been at this for eight days, and have done very little. The clause by clause rule has been completely broken. Instead of following the rules the delegates try to frighten us without reason or argument. It has been said that if the constitution be adopted, the Western counties will be lost. It is better that a few counties should be lost, than all America.

James Madison

I beg my colleagues to obey the clause-by-clause rule, and I will strive harder to stick with it myself.

William Grayson

The amount of horrors that we face have been exaggerated since the beginning of this Convention. Our Governor now tells us that we shall face wars and rumors of wars, and that we shall be ruined and disunited forever, unless we adopt this Constitution. Pennsylvania and Maryland are to fall upon us from the North, like the Goths and Vandals of old—The Indians are to invade us with numerous armies on our rear, in order to convert our cleared lands into hunting grounds—And the Carolinians from the South, mounted on alligators, I presume, are to come and destroy our corn fields and eat up our little children! These, Sir, are the mighty dangers which await us if we reject. Dangers which are merely imaginary, and ludicrous in the extreme!

As to direct taxation—give this up and you give up every thing, as it is the highest act of **sovereignty**: Surrender up this inestimable jewel, and you throw a pearl away richer than all your tribe.

George Mason

When the people of Virginia formed their Government, they reserved certain great powers in the Bill of Rights. They would not trust their own citizens with the exercise of those great powers reserved in the Bill of Rights. Why then, do we suppose that our fellow Virginians would support this plan? In this system we give up a great part of our rights to a Government

where the Representatives will have no communication with the people? I say then that there are great and important powers which need to be transferred to the State Governments, and given up to the General Government by this constitution.

Patrick Henry

The necessity of a Bill of Rights appears to me to be greater in this Government than ever it was in any Government before. A Bill of Rights may be summed up in a few words. What do they tell us? That our rights are reserved. Why not say so? Is it because it will consume too much paper?

These Gentlemen's reasons against a Bill of Rights do not satisfy me. Without saying which has the right side, it remains doubtful. A Bill of Rights is a favourite thing with the Virginians, and the people of the other States likewise. A Bill of Rights, even if unnecessary, will prevent any dispute.

George Mason

There is a fatal section which has created more dangers than any other. The first clause in section 9 of Article I allows the importation of slaves for twenty years. As much as I value a Union of all the States, I would not admit the Southern States into the Union unless they agreed to discontinue this disgraceful trade, because it would bring weakness and not strength to the Union. Furthermore, how can we include a clause to continue this **abominable** practice yet not include any protection for the property of that kind which we already have. I have ever looked upon this as a most disgraceful thing to America. I cannot express my **detestation** of it. Yet they have not secured us the property of the slaves we have already. So that 'They have done what they ought not to have done, and have left undone what they ought to have done.'

James Madison

I admit that this clause is inappropriate, and wish that it were possible for it be excluded. The Southern States would not have entered into the Union of America without the temporary permission of that trade. And if they were excluded from the Union, the consequences might be dreadful to them and to us.

We are not in a worse situation than before. That traffic is prohibited by Virginia laws, and we may continue the prohibition. The Union in general is not in a worse situation. Under the

articles of Confederation, it might be continued forever: But by this clause an end may be put to it after twenty years.

Great as the evil is, losing the Union would be worse.

ACT II: *Debate on Articles II, III, and IV of the Constitution*

Narrator 5

After nearly two weeks of debate, the delegates now turn their attention to the other articles of the constitution. There is considerable concern about the roles of both the executive and judiciary branches. A greater attempt is made to follow the clause-by-clause form for debate, with some notable exceptions.

George Mason

This is the most important section of the constitution. My opponents will say that the Executive may be removed and replaced by a new election, but history tells us that if the President of the United States may be reelected, he will be. Our governor is obliged to return, after a given period, to private life. It is so in most of the states. This President will be elected time after time and will be in office for life. Returning to the masses and experiencing their problems is the best way to make sure a man remembers the interests of his **constituents**.

The Vice President appears to me to be not only an unnecessary but dangerous officer. As President of the Senate, the state from which he comes may have two votes, when the others will have but one.

James Monroe

The President ought to depend on the people of America for his election, and should be responsible to all of the states in an equal degree. Under the constitution he is to be elected by electors, in a manner perfectly dissatisfactory to my mind. I believe that with this system he will owe his election to the state governments, and not to the people at large. He will then be elected by a majority of the states, and not necessarily by a majority of the people, giving an undue advantage to the small states.

I also see the Vice President as an unnecessary office, and must disapprove of this clause in its present form.

Optional William Grayson speech *(found separately)*

James Madison

Please allow me to make a few observations on this subject. While a number of my colleagues have objected to this system, none have put forth a better alternative. This was a difficult debate in the Philadelphia Convention, and would continue to be difficult for anyone attempting to find a perfect mode for electing the President. I will not argue with some of these gentlemen's objections, but will remind them that there is a great diversity of interests in these States. The choice for President should be made by the people. I have not yet found a better way of selecting him than that plan before us, and the other gentlemen have not provided one.

George Mason

I must object to the third Article dealing with the Judiciary. It appears to me that the majority of the powers given here are unnecessary and dangerous, and will at least impair if not destroy the state judiciaries and state legislatures. There is no limit on the reach of the Judiciary; it goes to every thing.

James Madison

With regards to the article establishing the Judiciary, I think we shall find nothing dangerous or inadmissible in it. My colleagues fear that members of a national legislature will behave poorly at every chance while ignoring all of their responsibilities. I would agree with them if this was a reasonable belief, but I do not find it so. I believe that these men are at least as willing to do their duty as to avoid it, and I believe in this great republican principle, that the people will have the virtue and intelligence to select men of virtue and wisdom. If we cannot find enough virtue in the people to make this selection, then no form of government will secure liberty or happiness for us. We need not depend on the virtue of our rulers, but in the people who are to choose them.

John Marshall

This part of the plan dealing with the Judiciary is a great improvement on that system from which we are now departing.

Gentlemen have gone on an idea that the federal courts will not make decisions with the same level of fairness and **impartial**ity as other courts. It seems to me that they object to federal **jurisdiction** because they don't believe in a fair trial in the federal courts. If a federal Judiciary is not created, then how will the people be protected from an **infringement** on the constitution? There is no other body that can afford such a protection.

There are objections concerning elements of a jury trial. The right of challenging the jurors is not secured in the Constitution. This is not done by our own state Constitution, or by any **provision** of the English government. It is not done by their Magna Charta, or the bill of rights? Why should its omission be objected to in the American Constitution? We are secure in Virginia without mentioning it in our Constitution, so why not this security for the federal court?

Patrick Henry

The whole history of human nature cannot produce a government like that before you. It seems to me that the manner in which the judiciary and other branches of the government are formed is calculated to make the states powerless and threatens the liberties of the people. It is with true concern, with grief, I tell you, that I have waited with pain to come to this part of the plan; because I observed gentlemen admit its being defective, and, I had my hopes, would have proposed amendments. But this part they have defended; and this convinces me of the necessity of obtaining amendments before it is adopted.

Adam Stephen

The gentleman [*pointing at Patrick Henry*] means to frighten us by his bugbears of hobgoblins and other horrors. I think I know as much as he does. I have travelled through the greater part of the Indian countries. I know them well, sir. If the gentleman does not like this government, let him go and live among the Indians. I know of several nations that live very happily; and I can furnish him with a vocabulary of their language.

George Nicholas

The honorable gentleman [*Mr. Henry*] has objected to the whole of this constitution, and if he had his way, no part of this government would be agreed to…—

Patrick Henry(*interrupting*)

I hope that the honorable gentleman meant nothing personal.

George Nicholas

I mean what I say, sir.

Edmund Pendleton

I hope that gentlemen will not be personal; that instead they will proceed to investigate the subject calmly, and in a peaceable manner.

William Grayson

I declare that I do not believe there ever existed a social **compact** upon the face of the earth so vague and so indefinite as the one now on the table.

ACT III: *Final Debates and Voting*

Narrator 1

After nearly three weeks of constant debate, the delegates were close to making a decision. While most delegates had made up their mind, the question of amendments to the Constitution still needed to be settled.

George Wythe

While the constitution is obviously improved from the Articles of Confederation, experience will show us areas for further improvement. The constitution provides a method for making amendments, and it seems to me that any changes we find necessary could be obtained after ratification. All of the states desire some changes, and many states have already proposed changes. I propose that this committee should ratify the constitution, and submit our own list of amendments for the consideration of the Congress.

Narrator 2

Mr. Wythe then read his proposal for ratification:

George Wythe

Whereas the powers granted under the proposed Constitution are the gift of the people, and every power not granted thereby remains with them, and at their will,—no right, therefore, of any denomination, can be cancelled, abridged, restrained, or modified, by the Congress, by the Senate or House of Representatives, acting in any capacity, by the President, or any department or officer of the United States, except in those instances in which power is given by the Constitution for those purposes; and, among other essential rights, liberty of conscience and of the press cannot be cancelled, abridged, restrained, or modified, by any authority of the United States.

Patrick Henry

Please forgive my immediate **dissent**, but if I understand correctly, we are admitting that the new system we are ratifying is defective from the beginning? Immediately after the proposed ratification, there comes a declaration that the paper before you is not intended to violate any of these three great rights—the liberty of religion, liberty of the press, and the trial by jury. What about all other rights? Those not listed are **relinquished**. Congress will not reason with you about the effect of this constitution. They will not take the opinion of this committee. They will interpret it as they please.

In this state there are two hundred and thirty-six thousand blacks, and there are many in several other states. But there are few or none in the Northern States. May Congress not say that every black man must fight? Did we not see a little of this last war? We were not so hard pushed as to make **emancipation** general; but acts of Assembly passed that every slave who would go to the army should be free.

Another thing will contribute to bring this event about. Slavery is detested. We feel its fatal effects—we deplore it with all the pity of humanity. Let all these considerations, at some future period, press with full force on the minds of Congress. They will search that paper, and see if they have power of **manumission**. And have they not, sir? Have they not power to provide for the general defence and welfare? May they not think that these call for the abolition of slavery? May they not pronounce all slaves free, and will they not be warranted by that power? The majority of Congress is to the north, and the slaves are to the south. In this situation, I see a great deal of the property of the people of Virginia in jeopardy, and their peace and tranquility gone. Let me not dwell on this subject. I will only add that this, as well as every other property of

the people of Virginia, is in jeopardy, and put in the hands of those who have no similarity of situation with us. This is a local matter, and I can see no **propriety** in subjecting it to Congress.

Have we not a right to say, Hear our propositions! Why, sir, your slaves have a right to make their humble requests. Those who are in the meanest occupations of human life have a right to complain.

James Madison

I am sure that the gentlemen who are searching for previous amendments are not aware of the dangers which must result. If we were to make changes and then ratify the constitution, the other ratifying states have the right to challenge us, saying: "It is not proper, decent, or right, in you, to demand that we should reverse what we have done. It is more reasonable that you should yield to us than we to you. You cannot exist without us; you must be a member of the Union." As far as Mr. Henry's amendments are not objectionable, or unsafe, so far they may be recommended after ratification—not because they are necessary, but because they can produce no possible danger, and may gratify some gentlemen's wishes. But I never can consent to his previous amendments, because they are pregnant with dreadful dangers.

Patrick Henry

He [*pointing at James Madison]* tells you of important blessings which he imagines will result to us and mankind in general, from the adoption of this system—I see the awful immensity of the dangers with which it is pregnant. I see it. I feel it. I see *beings* of a higher order, anxious concerning our decision. Our own happiness alone is not affected by the event—All nations are interested in the determination. We have it in our power to secure the happiness of one half of the human race. Its adoption may involve the misery of the other hemispheres—

Narrator 3

Here a violent storm arose, which put the House in such disorder that Mr. Henry was obliged to conclude.

George Nicholas

I do not mean to enter into any further debate. The friends of the Constitution wish to take up no more time, the matter being now fully discussed. The amendments contained in this

paper are those we wish. But we shall agree to any others which will not destroy the spirit of the Constitution, or that will better secure liberty.

Patrick Henry

If my colleagues feel as though the matter has been fully discussed then they are more content than I … I would apologize to the other delegates for surely taking more than my share of the time, and thank them for their patience and attention. If I am outvoted, I know that I will have lost fighting for the right cause. Yet I will be a peaceful citizen! I will work to correct the defects of this system, but in a constitutional manner! I shall therefore patiently wait in expectation of seeing that Government changed so as to be compatible with the safety, liberty, and happiness of the people.

Narrator 4

One final motion was voted on prior to the vote for ratification. The delegates considered whether— prior to ratifying the new Constitution of government recommended by the late federal convention—a declaration of rights, asserting and securing from **encroachment** the great principles of civil and religious liberty and the **unalienable** rights of the people, together with amendments to the most exceptionable parts of the said Constitution of government, ought to be referred by this Convention to the other states in the American confederacy for their consideration.

Edmund Pendleton

All those in favor please indicate … all opposed … [*Patrick Henry, James Monroe, William Grayson and George Mason all vote YES—Edmund Pendleton, George Nicholas, John Marshall, George Wythe, Edmund Randolph and James Madison all vote NO*].

Narrator 5

It passed in the negative—ayes, 80; noes, 88. The delegates then turned to the main question: shall the Convention agree to the first resolution in favor of ratification and the recommendation of subsequent amendments?

Edmund Pendleton

All those in favor please indicate … all opposed … [*Edmund Pendleton, George Nicholas, John Marshall, George Wythe, Edmund Randolph and James Madison all vote YES—Patrick Henry, James Monroe, William Grayson and George Mason all vote NO*].

Narrator 1

It passed in the affirmative, ayes 89; noes 79—therefore ratifying the Constitution on June 25, 1788. Following the ratification, the delegates remained in convention for two days in order to create a document certifying ratification along with a list of twenty Bill of Rights proposals and twenty amendment proposals, which were sent to the First Congress for consideration.

Narrator 2

With this vote Virginia becomes the tenth state to ratify the Constitution. The delegation from New Hampshire had ratified four days prior to this vote, effectively putting the Constitution into effect regardless of the decision from Virginia.

Narrator 3

However, it was the decision of the Virginia delegates that affirmed that the Constitution was to become a legitimate force.

Narrator 4

Copies of Virginia's decision were published in New York on July 2, making it clear to those delegates that they too must ratify the Constitution if they wished to have any political influence in the nation that surrounded them.

("The Newspaper Boy" posts and distributes a copy of the ratification with amendments.)

Narrator 5

The major characters from the Virginia Ratification Debates went on to serve the United States in a variety of ways:

William Grayson

After opposing the ratification of the Constitution, I was elected to the U.S. Senate and served from March 4, 1789, until my death in Dumfries, Virginia, on March 12, 1790.

George Nicholas

Following the Convention I moved to Kentucky, where I authored their Constitution and served as the state's first attorney general and as a law professor until my death in Lexington in 1799.

George Mason

Following the Convention, I was invited to become one of Virginia's Senators in the first U.S. Senate, but declined the offer, **shun**ning public office and retiring to my home, Gunston Hall, where I remained until my death on October 7, 1792.

Patrick Henry

I declined an appointment as President Washington's secretary of state due to my Anti-Federalist feelings. However, the events of the French Revolution led me to change my mind, and I ran and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates as a Federalist. Unfortunately, I died in 1799 before I was able to take the seat.

Governor Edmund Randolph

After the Convention I served as the first United States attorney general, and also as secretary of state under George Washington. A scandal forced me to retire from that position and from politics in 1795, after which I returned to my law practice until my death in 1813.

John Marshall

I served as the minister to France and as a member of Congress before accepting an appointment as the secretary of state under President John Adams, and was then appointed by Adams to be the chief justice of the United States in 1801. I famously served in this post until my death in 1835. I am one of few people to have served in all three levels of government—local, state, and national—along with all three branches of government—legislative, executive, and judiciary.

James Monroe

After siding with the Anti-Federalists, I was elected to the U.S. Senate, served as a minister to France, and was also elected governor of Virginia. I also served as secretary of state and secretary of war under President James Madison, prior to being elected the fifth president of the United States, where I most famously established the Monroe Doctrine. Following my life in politics I practiced law until my death on July 4, 1831.

James Madison

Following the Ratification Convention I served Virginia in the first U.S. Congress, where I crafted and ensured passage of the Bill of Rights. I later served as secretary of state under President Thomas Jefferson, and was elected the fourth president of the United States. After my terms as president, I retired from public life to my Montpelier estate in Orange County, Virginia, where I remained until my death in 1836.

William Grayson

The Electoral College seems to be founded on accident rather than on any principle of government. I have an extreme objection to the mode of his election. I presume the seven Eastern States will always elect him. As he is vested with the power of making treaties, and as there is a material distinction between the carrying and productive states, the former will be disposed to have him to themselves. He will accommodate himself to their interests in forming treaties, and they will continue him **perpetually** in office. Thus mutual interest will lead them reciprocally to support one another. It will be a government of a faction, and this observation will apply to every part of it; for, having a majority, they may do what they please.

(*pulls a folded piece of paper from his vest pocket)*

I have made an estimate which shows with what facility they will be able to re-elect him. The number of electors is equal to the number of representatives and senators; that is, ninety-one. They are to vote for two persons. They give, therefore, one hundred and eighty-two votes. Let there be forty-five votes for four different candidates, and two for the President. He is one of the five highest, having but two votes, which he may easily purchase. In this case, by the 3d clause of the 1st section of the 2d article, the election is to be by the representatives, with the winner accumulating the most states in his favor:

Therefore, once in the House of Representatives, the President would win reelection by having the majority of the representatives in 7 states vote for him.

(don't read the table)

New Hampshire,	3 representatives is	2
Rhode Island,	1	1
Connecticut,	5	3
New Jersey,	4	3
Delaware,	1	1
Georgia,	3	2
North Carolina,	5	3
		—
A majority of seven states is		15

Thus the majority of seven states is but 15,

while the minority amounts to 50.

The total number of voices (91 electors and 65 representatives) is 156

Voices in favor of the President are, 2

state electors and 15 representatives, 17

—

139

Let him win New Hampshire, a majority of its three representatives is two votes.

Let him win Rhode Island, one representative and one vote,

Connecticut, a majority of its five representatives with three votes,

New Jersey, a majority of its four representatives with three votes,

Delaware, one representative and one vote,

A majority of Georgia's three representatives with two votes, and

A majority of North Carolina's five representatives with three votes.

Therefore, the President could win reelection with a majority of state support with only fifteen votes in his favor. In other words, with a possibility of 156 votes, 91 state electors and, 65 representatives, the President may be reelected by the voices of 17 against 139.

It may be said that this is an **extravagant** case, and will never happen. In my opinion, it will often happen. A person who is a favorite of Congress, if he gets but two votes of electors, may, by the subsequent choice of 15 representatives, be elected President. Surely the possibility of such a case ought to be excluded. I shall postpone mentioning in what manner he ought to be elected, till we come to offer amendments.