

The Constitution & Compromise

The Federal Constitution, constructed at Independence Hall in the heat of the Summer of 1787, was in essence a series of compromises meant to ease fears and placate the doubters resisting the creation of a new governmental system to supplant the Confederation. Both during the creation and the ratification of the Constitution, many fears had to be addressed before the document's adoption. The chart below will help illustrate the causes of those fears and the constitutional provisions made to allow the new constitution to be created.

	Fear	Source of Fear	Constitutional Provision Made to Calm Fear	Location
1	Fear of Large States	Smaller states feared a loss of identity, and sovereignty (power).		(Article, Section, Clause) AI, S2, C3
2	Fear of Small States	Larger states feared the unequal power given to smaller states in the Confederation.		AI, S3, C1
3	Fear of the Common People	Men of property and credit feared the passions and turbulence of mass democracy, as exemplified by Shays' Rebellion.		AI, S2, C1 AI, S3, C1 AII, S1, C2 AII, S2, C2
4	Fear of a Weak Government	Men of property and credit were concerned about debtor rebellions such as Shays', trade barriers, and a lack of uniform currency.		AVI, C 2 AI, S4,C18
5	Fear of a Strong Government	States feared a loss of sovereignty (power), individuals a loss of rights.		Amend. X, etc.
6	Fear of the Unwritten Word	England had no written constitution.		
7	Fear of Other States	States feared border/land and trade disputes.		AI, S8, C3
8	Fear of Foreign Powers	The states, under the Articles, were incapable of defending themselves, enforcing trade agreements, or gaining foreign respect.		AI, S8, C11 AII, S2, C1 AII, S2, C2
9	Fear of a Strong Executive	Experience with the English Parliament and King George III.		
10	Fear of Losing Individual Rights	There were no written guarantees of individual rights in the new Constitution.		Amendments
11	Fear of the Power of Northern States	Southern states feared that the population advantage in Northern states would mean domination over Southern states in the new government.		AI, S2, C3
12	Fear of the Power to Tax	Americans feared taxation without representation by an arbitrary power--"the power to tax is the power to destroy."		AI, S7, C1

