

The Constitution: A bundle of Compromises

Conflict #1: States with large populations believed that representation in Congress should be based on population. They believed a state like Virginia, with 300,000 people, should have more votes in Congress than a small state like Rhode Island which only had 30,000 people. Small states believed that representation in Congress should be equal. In other words, every state should have the same number of votes in Congress.

Conflict #2: If representation should be based on population, who should be counted? Southern states argued that slaves should be counted as part of the population. Since the south had more slaves, this would increase their representation in Congress. Northern states, which had fewer slaves, believed that slaves should not count as part of the population.

Conflict #3: A resolution was proposed to stop the importation of slaves from Africa. Two states--Georgia and South Carolina opposed ending the slave trade and threatened to leave the convention if the resolution passed.

Conflict #4: There was a great deal of disagreement over how the President ought to be chosen. A few delegates believed that the people ought to cast votes for office. Some believed that the state legislatures ought to choose the President. Others believed the President ought to be chosen by Congress.

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Conflict Description	Who was it between?	My solution	Compromise and description
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Debrief: Which of these compromises would you consider to be most important and why?

Which do you think was the greatest mistake? Why?