

Chapter 23 -- The New American Government Starts Up



Dates:
1788-1789

Sections:

- Washington And The Federalists Win The Election of 1788

Time: December 1788- January 1789

Washington And The Federalists Win The Election Of 1788



As word of the rebellion in France reaches America, preparations are under way to elect the nation's first Congress and Executive.

Despite pleas from George Washington to avoid partisan politics, the divisions between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists show through quickly.

George Washington (1732-1799)

Some Partisan Tendencies In The 1789 Election

Anti-Federalists	Federalists
Fear federal intrusion on states	Favor a strong central authority
Agricultural economy	Economy is diversifying
Protective of slavery	Not dependent on slavery
Minimize federal costs and taxes	Active funding and support of business
More prevalent in South	More prevalent in North

States schedule their elections on different days, running between December 15, 1788 and January 10, 1779. All states select members of Congress, but three (New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island) do not participate in the presidential race. Of the ten that do, popular voting occurs in only six: Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey.

The right to vote for president is limited to men with property, with rules varying by state. The actual popular vote count across the six states totals only 43,782, or 1.3% of the nation's total population.

As expected, George Washington is chosen as first President of the United States. He receives almost 90% of all the popular votes cast, and is listed on all 69 of the “elector ballots.”

According to the Constitution, all “electors” name two choices for President, including one not from their own state – with whomever receives the second most votes becoming Vice President. This honor goes to John Adams by a wide margin.

Results Of The 1788 Presidential Election

Candidates	State	Party	Pop Vote	Tot EV	South	Border	North
George Washington	Virginia	Independent	39,624	69	22	9	38
John Adams	Mass	Federalist		34			
John Jay	New York	Federalist		9			
Robert Harrison	Maryland	Federalist		6			
John Rutledge	S Carolina	Federalist		6			
John Hancock	Mass	Federalist		4			
George Clinton	New York	Anti-Federalist		3			
All-Others (5)			4,158	7			
Total			43,782	138			
Needed To Win				35			

Note: South (VA, N Carolina, S Carolina, Georgia), Border (Delaware, Maryland), North (NH, Mass, NY, NJ, Penn, RI, Conn)

The “Anti-Administration” candidates fare much better in elections for the first House of Representatives – with victories across the Southern and Border states offset by losses in the North. Overall the Federalists end up with a 37 to 28 margin in the lower chamber.

House Of Representatives Election Of 1788

South	# Seats	Pro-Admin	Anti-Admin
Virginia	10	3	7
North Carolina	5	2	3
South Carolina	5	2	3
Georgia	3	0	3
South	23	7	16
Delaware	1	1	0
Maryland	6	2	4
Border	7	3	4
New Hampshire	3	2	1
Massachusetts	8	6	2
Rhode Island	1	1	0
Connecticut	5	5	0
New York	6	3	3
New Jersey	4	4	0
Pennsylvania	8	6	2
North	35	27	8
Total	65	37	28

State legislators are charged with picking their two Senators, and the outcome favors the Pro-Administration forces by 19-7.

Senate Elections In 1788

South	Pro-Admin	Anti-Admin
Virginia		2
North Carolina	2	
South Carolina	2	
Georgia		2
South	4	4
Delaware	1	1
Maryland	2	
Border	3	1
New Hampshire	1	1
Massachusetts	2	
Rhode Island	2	
Connecticut	2	
New York	2	
New Jersey	2	
Pennsylvania	1	1
North	12	2
Total	19	7

Of the 26 men selected to the upper chamber, 11 had been delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

Senators Who Also Served At The 1787 Convention

South	Convention Members
Virginia	None
North Carolina	None
South Carolina	Pierce Butler
Georgia	William Few
Delaware	Richard Bassett, George Read
Maryland	None
New Hampshire	John Langdon
Massachusetts	Caleb Strong
Rhode Island	None
Connecticut	Oliver Ellsworth, William Johnson
New York	Rufus King
New Jersey	William Patterson
Pennsylvania	Robert Morris