

The Federalist papers or essay are a collection of 85 articles and essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay advocating the ratification of the United States Constitution. In these papers, the authors defend the Constitution and describe how this new document would bring freedom and security to the new formed USA.



The Federalist, No. 58, Madison February 20, 1788
To the People of the State of New York

The remaining charge against the House of Representatives which I am to examine, is grounded on a supposition that the number of members will not be augmented from time to time, as the progress of population may demand.

It has been admitted that this objection, if well supported, would have great weight. The following observations will shew that like most other objections against the constitution, it can only proceed from a partial view of the subject; or from a jealousy which discolours and disfigures every object which is beheld. . . .

Within every successive term of ten years, a census of inhabitants is to be repeated. . . . first, to readjust from time to time the apportionment of representatives to the number of inhabitants; under the single exception that each state shall have one representative at least; Secondly, to augment the number of representatives at the same periods; under the sole limitation, that the whole number shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand inhabitants. . . .

There is a peculiarity in the federal constitution which ensures a watchful attention in a majority both of the people and of their representatives, to a constitutional augmentation of the latter. The peculiarity lies in this, that one branch of the legislature is a representation of citizens; the other of the states: in the former consequently the larger states will have most weight; in the latter, the advantage will be in favour of the smaller states. . . .

Notwithstanding the equal authority which will subsist between the two houses on all legislative subjects, except the originating of money bills, it cannot be doubted that the house composed of the greater number of members, when supported by the more powerful states, and speaking the known and determined sense of a majority of the people, will have no small advantage in a question depending on the comparative firmness of the two houses. . . .

. . . The house of representatives can not only refuse, but they alone can propose the supplies requisite for the support of government. They in a word hold the purse; that powerful instrument by which we behold in the history of the British constitution, an infant and humble representation of the people, gradually enlarging the sphere of its activity and importance, and finally reducing, as far as it seems to have wished, all the overgrown prerogatives of the other branches of the government. This power over the purse, may in fact be regarded as the most compleat and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure. . . .

1. When was this document created? _____ Who wrote this document? _____
2. Why did Madison favor giving the larger states representation according to population? _____

3. Which branch of the federal government is a "representation of its citizens"? _____
 Why did Madison characterize it as such? _____

4. Madison believed one legislative power was more important than all the others. Which legislative body had this power, and why did Madison consider it so important? _____

