

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview– Short Film:
“The Anti-Federalists” (10–15 Minutes)
(TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY)

Goal

In this short film (7:27), Tom Richey explains why the Antifederalists (that is, the real Federalists, not the Nationalists who called themselves Federalists) opposed the U.S. Constitution.

Instructions

1. Play this film for students; tell them to take notes on main ideas/interesting facts:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKdCGXtCctw>
2. Put students in pairs/groups and have them discuss for 3–5 minutes, then as a class (ask for main ideas).

Notes

(It’s a helpful idea to consistently use the term *Federalists* to label what most powerful-government supporters label as *Antifederalists*, and the term *Nationalists* to label what most label as *Federalists*.)

- The Federalists’ issue with the proposed Constitution is that it created a huge, powerful central government.
- Federalists believed the Constitution would undermine republicanism (that is, it would overrule the people, be too far away, and subject to domination by special interests) and create a tyranny.
- Many Federalists wanted term limits on government officials.
- Federalists saw the creation of a giant centralized government as a lack of respect for the powers of the states (nations!), and an attempt to get the states to give up power.
- Many Americans believed that the only true republic was a state (close enough to the people).
- Federalists and other Americans despised the idea of allowing a faraway, central government to tax them; Patrick Henry said that Americans would now have two tax gatherers, state and federal—and he (and many others) saw this as a threat to freedom.
- The Philadelphia convention was dominated by commercial interests.
- One of the biggest complains of the Federalists: There was no Bill of Rights in the proposed Constitution. (Why? All state constitutions had them! Federalists saw this as very suspicious.)
- Alexander Hamilton: “We don’t need a BOR! We only have listed powers; we would never go outside of those!” Federalists didn’t believe it for one second.
- Federalists do have a legacy: the Bill of Rights. (We’ll talk about this soon.)

Wrap-Up

Ask students:

- Do you understand the deep concerns of the real Federalists?
- Do you see what could happen if a majority got control of the U.S. government—how it could force its will upon the minority, and that a certain section of the country that was more influential/populous could violate the rights of the rest of the states?