

***American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview. Short Film:
“Thomas DiLorenzo – The 17th Amendment” (10–12 Minutes)***

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

Goal

In this short (8:23) film, Thomas DiLorenzo explains how state powers were better protected before the passing of the Seventeenth Amendment.

Instructions

1. Play the short film above here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTV6GIBfNIg>.
2. Discuss as a class by asking for volunteers for their thoughts.

Debrief Questions

1. How did state legislatures’ appointing senators before the Seventeenth Amendment advance the cause of *federalism* (balancing state and U.S. government powers)?

States instructed senators to vote a certain way, more often than not in a way that benefited the states’ powers instead of empowering the U.S. government over the states.

2. What does the speaker point out about how many U.S. senators get funded today?

They get funding from sources outside their own states, even traveling there to get financial backing. This makes it much less likely that they will fight for their states’ interests, but instead for interests that bribe them into voting for policies that benefit the bribing agents/companies. These votes often result in increased U.S. government powers as well.

3. What did James Madison say about the Constitution’s ability to stop the U.S. government from taking more powers that the document granted, and how did the state legislatures’ sending senators to Washington relate to this?

Madison said that the Constitution was simply a piece of parchment that couldn’t by itself stop any oppressive or illegal act by the U.S. government, and that one way states could fight the tendency for this government to take unconstitutional powers was to have the states send senators who represented the people and those states’ powers.

4. What do you think about those southern state legislatures who fired their senators when they didn’t vote the way they were instructed?

AWW!