

PRIMARY SOURCE

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

1 **We the People** of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish  
2 Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the  
3 general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do  
4 ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

5 **Article I.**

6 Section 1.

7 All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States,  
8 which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

9 Section 2.

10 The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year  
11 by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the  
12 Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State  
13 Legislature.

14 No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five  
15 Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when  
16 elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

17 Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which  
18 may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be  
19 determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to  
20 Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other  
21 Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting  
22 of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in  
23 such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not  
24 exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one  
25 Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire  
26 shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence  
27 Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight,  
28 Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and  
29 Georgia three.

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30 When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority  
31 thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

32 The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall  
33 have the sole Power of Impeachment.

34 Section 3.

35 The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each  
36 State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one  
37 Vote.

38 Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall  
39 be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first  
40 Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the  
41 Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so  
42 that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by  
43 Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the  
44 Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the  
45 Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

46 No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and  
47 been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an  
48 Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

49 The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no  
50 Vote, unless they be equally divided.

51 The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the  
52 Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the  
53 United States.

54 The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that  
55 Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is

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56 tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the  
57 Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

58 Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office,  
59 and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the  
60 United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to  
61 Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

62 Section 4.

63 The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives,  
64 shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any  
65 time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.  
66 The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be  
67 on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

68 Section 5.

69 Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own  
70 Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a smaller  
71 Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance  
72 of absent Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may  
73 provide.

74 Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for  
75 disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

76 Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the  
77 same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and  
78 Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of  
79 those Present, be entered on the Journal.

80 Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn  
81 for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

82 Section 6.

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83 The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be  
84 ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases,  
85 except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their  
86 Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the  
87 same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other  
88 Place.

89 No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to  
90 any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the  
91 Emoluments whereof shall have been increased during such time; and no Person holding any  
92 Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in  
93 Office.

94 Section 7.

95 All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may  
96 propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

97 Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it  
98 become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it,  
99 but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated,  
100 who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such  
101 Reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent, together with  
102 the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by  
103 two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses  
104 shall be determined by yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the  
105 Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned  
106 by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the  
107 Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their  
108 Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a Law.

109 Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of  
110 Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to  
111 the President of the United States; and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by

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112 him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of  
113 Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

114 Section 8.

115 The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises,  
116 to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States;  
117 but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

118 To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

119 To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian  
120 Tribes;

121 To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies  
122 throughout the United States;

123 To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights  
124 and Measures;

125 To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United  
126 States;

127 To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

128 To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and  
129 Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

130 To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

131 To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the  
132 Law of Nations;

133 To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on  
134 Land and Water;

135 To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer  
136 Term than two Years;

137 To provide and maintain a Navy;

138 To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

139 To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections  
140 and repel Invasions;

141 To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of  
142 them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively,

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143 the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the  
144 discipline prescribed by Congress;

145 To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten  
146 Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become  
147 the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places  
148 purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the  
149 Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And  
150 To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing  
151 Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States,  
152 or in any Department or Officer thereof.

153 Section 9.

154 The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper  
155 to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred  
156 and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for  
157 each Person.

158 The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of  
159 Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

160 No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

161 No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or  
162 enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

163 No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

164 No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one  
165 State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter,  
166 clear, or pay Duties in another.

167 No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by  
168 Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money  
169 shall be published from time to time.

170 No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of  
171 Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present,  
Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

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172 Section 10.

173 No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of Marque and  
174 Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in  
175 Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation  
176 of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

177 No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or  
178 Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing it's inspection Laws: and the net  
179 Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of  
180 the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Controul  
181 of the Congress.

182 No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any Duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships  
183 of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a  
184 foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not  
185 admit of delay.

186 **Article II**

187 Section 1.

188 The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold  
189 his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the  
190 same Term, be elected, as follows

191 Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of  
192 Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be  
193 entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or  
194 Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

195 The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom  
196 one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a  
197 List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign  
198 and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the  
199 President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in the Presence of the Senate and  
200 House of Representatives, open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted. The

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201 Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President, if such Number be a Majority  
202 of the whole Number of Electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such  
203 Majority, and have an equal Number of Votes, then the House of Representatives shall  
204 immediately chuse by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have a Majority, then  
205 from the five highest on the List the said House shall in like Manner chuse the President. But in  
206 chusing the President, the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State  
207 having one Vote; A quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member or Members from two  
208 thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case,  
209 after the Choice of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of the Electors  
210 shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal Votes, the  
211 Senate shall chuse from them by Ballot the Vice President.

212 The Congress may determine the Time of chusing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall  
213 give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

214 No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the  
215 Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any Person  
216 be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been  
217 fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

218 In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to  
219 discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President,  
220 and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability,  
221 both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and  
222 such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

223 The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither  
224 be encreased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall  
225 not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

226 Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—  
227 "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United  
228 States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the  
229 United States."



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230 Section 2.

231 The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of  
232 the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may  
233 require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments,  
234 upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to  
235 grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of  
236 Impeachment.

237 He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties,  
238 provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the  
239 Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and  
240 Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose  
241 Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but  
242 the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in  
243 the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

244 The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the  
245 Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

246 Section 3.

247 He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and  
248 recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he  
249 may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of  
250 Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to  
251 such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he  
252 shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the  
253 United States.

254 Section 4.

255 The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from  
256 Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and  
257 Misdemeanors.

258 **Article III**

259 Section 1.

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260 The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such  
261 inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of  
262 the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at  
263 stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during  
264 their Continuance in Office.

265 Section 2.

266 The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution,  
267 the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their  
268 Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls;—to all  
269 Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to Controversies to which the United States shall  
270 be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;— between a State and Citizens of  
271 another State,—between Citizens of different States,—between Citizens of the same State  
272 claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and  
273 foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.

274 In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a  
275 State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases  
276 before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact,  
277 with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.

278 The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be  
279 held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed  
280 within any State, the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law have  
281 directed.

282 Section 3.

283 Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering  
284 to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless  
285 on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

286 The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of  
287 Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person  
288 attainted.

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289 **Article IV.**

290 Section 1.

291 Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial  
292 Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in  
293 which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

294 Section 2.

295 The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the  
296 several States.

297 A Person charged in any State with Treason, Felony, or other Crime, who shall flee from Justice,  
298 and be found in another State, shall on Demand of the executive Authority of the State from  
299 which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having Jurisdiction of the Crime.  
300 No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another,  
301 shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or  
302 Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be  
303 due.

304 Section 3.

305 New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or  
306 erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two  
307 or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned  
308 as well as of the Congress.

309 The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations  
310 respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this  
311 Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any  
312 particular State.

313 Section 4.

314 The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government,  
315 and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the  
316 Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

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317 **Article V.**

318 The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose  
319 Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the  
320 several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be  
321 valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of  
322 three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the  
323 other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment  
324 which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner  
325 affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State,  
326 without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

327 **Article VI.**

328 All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution,  
329 shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.  
330 This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof;  
331 and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be  
332 the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in  
333 the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

334 The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State  
335 Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several  
336 States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test  
337 shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

338 **Article VII.**

339 The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this  
340 Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

341 The Word, "the," being interlined between the seventh and eighth Lines of the first Page, The  
342 Word "Thirty" being partly written on an Erasure in the fifteenth Line of the first Page, The  
343 Words "is tried" being interlined between the thirty second and thirty third Lines of the first Page  
344 and the Word "the" being interlined between the forty third and forty fourth Lines of the second  
345 Page.

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346 Attest William Jackson Secretary

347 done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of

348 September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the

349 Independance of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereunto

350 subscribed our Names,

351 **Delaware**

352 Geo: Read

353 Gunning Bedford jun

354 John Dickinson

355 Richard Bassett

356 Jaco: Broom

357 **Maryland**

358 James McHenry

359 Dan of St Thos. Jenifer

360 Danl. Carroll

361 **Virginia**

362 John Blair

363 James Madison Jr.

364 **North Carolina**

365 Wm. Blount

366 Richd. Dobbs Spaight

367 Hu Williamson

368 **South Carolina**

369 Rutledge

370 Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

371 Charles Pinckney

372 Pierce Butler

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373 **Georgia**

374 William Few

375 Abr Baldwin

376 **New Hampshire**

377 John Langdon

378 Nicholas Gilman

379 **Massachusetts**

380 Nathaniel Gorham

381 Rufus King

382 **Connecticut**

383 Wm. Saml. Johnson

384 Roger Sherman

385 **New York**

386 Alexander Hamilton

387 **New Jersey**

388 Wil: Livingston

389 David Brearley

390 Wm. Paterson

391 Jona: Dayton

392 **Pennsylvania**

393 B Franklin

394 Thomas Mifflin

395 Robt. Morris

396 Geo. Clymer

397 Thos. FitzSimons

398 Jared Ingersoll

399 James Wilson

400 Gouv Morris