

Good example of essay on federalism at the forefront

[Law](#), [Constitution](#)



Since the ratification of the United States Constitution in 1789, there has been persistent controversy over the rights of the states vs. the rights of the federal government. At times, the controversy has taken the shape of a power struggle. There are three specific factors that have given the federal government its immense power, and in light of the ever-changing interpretation of the Constitution, it becomes easier to see how national power has come to the forefront.

The Constitution created three branches of national government that have both a large scope and powerful reach. The Executive Branch, i. e. the President, is able to sign bills into laws. This gives him a great deal of authority and power. He also has the power to veto bills that the Legislative Branch has passed. In turn, however, the Congress (the Legislative Branch) can override a Presidential veto with a 2/3 vote. The Judicial Branch rules on the Constitutionality of laws at both the state and federal levels, and is therefore a body of nine Justices with a large discretion and holds vast interpretive power of the U. S. Constitution.

Since the abovementioned triumvirate of national power is located in the nation's capital, Washington, D. C., it was a natural, albeit unplanned, consolidation of power that took place in this one location. However, there were, over the years, passages of more amendments to the Constitution that further consolidated national power -- to the point that federalism vastly superceded the powers and rights of the individual states.

Seemingly, each additional amendment to the ten Bill of Rights empowered the federal government, rendering states to an almost-secondary status. For example, the 16th Amendment was passed to legalize the collection of a

national income tax. At no time prior to this amendment did the United States' Congress " have the power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States and without regard to any census or enumeration" (n. p., internet). The income tax law both solidified and strengthened the sovereignty of the federal government and the U. S. Treasury.

The 18th amendment was ratified to prohibit the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages (n. p., internet). This was a sweeping amendment that strengthened the position of the federal government. Arguably, the powerful law enforcement agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) never would have been formed and funded so liberally, had it not been for the ratification of the 18th amendment. Also, the legacy of bootlegging and organized crime may have been solely a matter of state and local law enforcement, but the mold was already set, and momentum was in full swing towards the centralization of federal powers.

The 19th Amendment granted universal suffrage to citizens 18 years or older. Again, this was a sweeping initiative that included voters participating at state polls as well -- not just national ones (n. p., internet). Thus, the federal government continued to become stronger and overshadow the diminishing prerogative of states, eventually passing the tilting point and putting the national government's laws and powers at the forefront.

The United States Constitution was already built on a framework that invested a great deal of power in the federal government. Due to changes in the ratification of subsequent amendments, the national powers-that-be grew stronger and more centralized, while the states' powers weakened over

the same period of time. Whether this trend will continue remains to be seen.

Works Cited

" Bill of Rights and Amendments to the Constitution." (n. p.). American History: From Revolution to Reconstruction and Beyond., 2012. Web. 03 Jul 2015.