

Most national
government. this
mistrust was the
basis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Most Americans were very suspicious of government, but the Anti-Federalist was really mistrustful of the government in general and strong national government.

This mistrust was the basis of their opposition to the constitution. They feared it had created a government the people could not control. Many distinguished Americans were Anti-Federalists. Leaders included George Mason and Elbridge Gerry. Both attended the Philadelphia Convention but had refused to sign the constitution. The Anti-Federalist argued that the Constitution had many flaws. They thought that it should have been developed in meetings whose proceedings were open to the public.

And it would undermine a republican form of government. It gave too much power to the national government at the expense of the powers of state governments. It gave too much power to the executive branch of the national government at the expense of the other branches. It gave too much power because of the necessary and proper clause.

It did not adequately separate the powers of the executive and legislative branches. In addition, it allowed the national government to keep an army during peacetime. And also it did not include a bill of rights. They feared that because of these flaws in the Constitution, the new national government would be a threat to their national rights.

They also thought that the constitution had been developed by an elite and privileged group to create a national government for the purpose of serving its own selfish interest. They thought the only safe government that if it had a local and closely linked with the will of the people. And controlled by the

<https://assignbuster.com/most-national-government-this-mistrust-was-the-basis/>

people, by such means as we have yearly elections and replacing people in key positions often. The Federalist knew that many members of Congress and the state governments were against the new Constitution, largely because it reduced their powers. So the federalist decided not to ask the Congress or state governments to approve the Constitution, even though they were expected to do so.

Today, now that the Constitution has worked successfully for 200 years, it would be easy to ignore the anti-federalist of 1787 and 1788 as an unimportant historical force, a collection of no constructive reactionaries and cranks. Actually, the anti-federalist may well have represented the views of the majority of the Americans, whose reasons for preferring the old Articles of Confederation were firmly within the democratic tradition. Among the anti-federalist were fiery old patriot leaders who feared that centralized power was an invitation to tyranny. Among those who preferred the Articles was Samuel Adams—still padding like an old cat around the streets of Boston on the lookout for threats to liberty, still dressing in the fashions of 1776? Adams opposed the new government until Massachusetts Federalist, needing his support, agreed to press for a national bill of rights. In Virginia, none other than Patrick Henry battled James Madison around the state. Some of Henry's arguments against the Constitution were foolish. At one point he concluded that the Constitution was an invitation to the pope to set up his court in the U.

S. But Henry and other Anti-federalist also argued that free republican institutions could survive only in small countries such as Switzerland and ancient Greece, and they had the weight of historical evidence on their side. <https://assignbuster.com/most-national-government-this-mistrust-was-the-basis/>

When Rome, the greatest republic of them all, grew large, it became despotic. Would the same thing happen to Rhode Island and Virginia and Georgia and other small independent states when they were subsumed into a centralized U.

S.? Answering this objection to the Constitution was the Federalists most difficult task. Madison, Hamilton, and John Jay of New York took it upon themselves to do so in 85 essays under the name The Federalist Papers still a basic textbook of political philosophy. they argued that a powerful U. S. would also guarantee liberty.

these ingenious essays, however, were less important to the triumph of the Federalist than their agreement to add a bill of rights to their Constitution.