

"A More Perfect Union"

Constitution Readers Theatre

Cast List:

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| ▶ ARTICLES (OF CONFEDERATION) | ▶ NARRATOR 6 |
| ▶ SMALL STATES | ▶ NARRATOR 7 |
| ▶ LARGE STATES | ▶ FRAMER 1 |
| ▶ NARRATOR 1 | ▶ FRAMER 2 |
| ▶ NARRATOR 2 | ▶ FRAMER 3 |
| ▶ NARRATOR 3 | ▶ FRAMER 4 |
| ▶ NARRATOR 4 | ▶ FRAMER 5 |
| ▶ NARRATOR 5 | |

Narrator 1: In the summer of 1787, fifty-five men called Framers...

Framer 1: I'm a Framer!

Framer 2: So am I!

Narrator 1: . . . went to Philadelphia to begin working on a new Constitution. For six years, America had a weak central government created by the Articles of Confederation.

Articles: (*weakly*) What's wrong with me? I was OK when I was written.

Framer 3: You are too weak. We need a strong central government.

Framer 4: (*Patting ARTICLES on the back*) It's OK. You did the job we needed, but now we need something else.

Articles: (*Slouching*) I do feel rather weak.

Narrator 2: The men met all summer long. The weather was hot and so were the arguments!

Framer 1: (*Powerfully*) We need to protect states' rights!

Narrator 2: Under the Articles of Confederation, each state was like its own little country. Each made its own laws. Each had its own currency.

Framer 3: We need to protect states' rights, but we also need to be a "more perfect union."

Narrator 3: America needed to be more united. It needed one currency. It needed to be able to protect the people of the United States.

Framer 2: This Constitution must "establish justice" and "insure domestic tranquility."

Framer 3: It must also "provide for the common defense" and "promote the general welfare."

Narrator 3: The Framers got to work. They wanted to make sure that they had a strong leader who would not be a king.

Small States: NO KING! NO KING!

Large States: We need a strong leader!

Framer 4: A president is what we will need. A president will lead our country. He will sign laws or veto them. The president will work on foreign policy. He will be in charge of the armed forces.

Framer 5: This will be the Executive Branch.

Narrator 4: The first part of the government was decided. But, an argument arose during the meetings over representation of the people.

Small States: We want to be represented equally.

Large States: But we have more people than you do! How will we work this out?

Framer 1: I have an idea!

Narrator 4: The Great Compromise was put in place. This formed the Legislative Branch of our government. It is called "Congress."

Framer 2: Our Legislature will have two houses. One will be the House of Representatives.

Large States: The House of Representatives is based on population. That makes us happy!

Framer 3: The other will be the Senate.

Small States: Two senators from each state. We like that.

Narrator 5: Now, the Framers needed to put together the Judicial Branch. This branch of government would make sure the laws lined up with what the Constitution says.

Framer 4: The highest court in the land will be called the Supreme Court.

Framer 5: That's a great idea! We need to keep checks and balances on all the branches of government!

Narrator 5: Things we shaping up. The new government was set. The Constitution would replace the Articles of Confederation. One Article set up cooperation among the states. They would have to get along. The states had to obey the central government.

Small States: We're glad we'll be working together now.

Large States: (*Shaking SMALL STATE'S hand*) It will be much better this way.

Narrator 6: The new Constitution also had a way it could be changed. It wouldn't be easy to make a change but the Framers knew it would be necessary someday. They didn't want to have to start over again. This made the document a "Living Document." Once approved, it would be the highest law in the land. All the other laws would have to agree with the Constitution.

Framer 1: It's time to send this on to the states.

Small States: We like it! We'll approve!

Narrator 7: Nine states would need to approve the Constitution. But there was a small catch.

Large States: Hmm...There's nothing in here about people's rights. I think I'll send a letter to the Congress.

Framer 5: It's a good thing we added in the part about changing the Constitution!

Narrator 7: The Congress agreed that the rights of the people needed to be added. They promised the states that they would form a Bill of Rights for the people. Soon the Constitution was approved, and the Bill of Rights was added. A strong government was in place . . .

ALL: . . . for the United States of America!

THE END!!!