

## The Battle Over Representation at the Constitutional Convention: Who Won? Who Lost?

During the Constitutional Convention, debate over how people should be represented in the new government's legislature quickly turned into a conflict between two groups of states: large and small. The small states, represented by New Jersey, came up with one plan. The large states, led by the largest of them all, Virginia, had another plan. Eventually, the deadlock was broken by a compromise proposed by Connecticut.

The Connecticut Compromise, also known as the Great Compromise, called for a bicameral (two house) legislature, with one house organized by population (with enslaved people counted as  $\frac{3}{5}$  of non enslaved people) and one house with equal representation for each state.

In this lesson, you have a chance to work with some of the numbers from 1789 and today to get a sense of the real consequence of each of the proposed plans.

### Data from 1789

State	Population		NJ Plan*		VA Plan*		CT Compromise**	
	People	Pct. of Total	Electors	Pct. of Total	Electors	Pct. of Total	Electors	Pct. of Total
Connecticut	237,655	6.5%	7	7.7%	6	6.6%	7	7.7%
Delaware**	59,096	1.6%	7	7.7%	1	1.1%	3	3.3%
Georgia**	82,548	2.3%	7	7.7%	2	2.2%	3	3.3%
Maryland**	319,728	8.8%	7	7.7%	8	8.8%	7	7.7%
Massachusetts	378,556	10.4%	7	7.7%	9	9.9%	9	9.9%
New Hampshire	141,899	3.9%	7	7.7%	4	4.4%	5	5.5%
New Jersey**	184,139	5.1%	7	7.7%	5	5.5%	6	6.6%
New York**	340,241	9.4%	7	7.7%	8	8.8%	9	9.9%
North Carolina**	395,005	10.9%	7	7.7%	10	11.0%	9	9.9%
Pennsylvania	433,611	11.9%	7	7.7%	11	12.1%	10	11.0%
Rhode Island	69,112	1.9%	7	7.7%	2	2.2%	3	3.3%
South Carolina**	247,073	6.8%	7	7.7%	6	6.6%	6	6.6%
Virginia**	747,550	20.6%	7	7.7%	19	20.9%	14	15.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,636,213</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Estimate based on proportional representation by population in a 91 elector scenario.

\*\* With enslaved people counted as  $\frac{3}{5}$  of non enslaved people.

**Compare the plans. Use numbers to defend your answer.**

What state would have benefitted the most from the New Jersey Plan? Why?

What state would have benefitted the most from the Virginia Plan? Why?

What state's representation increased the most in the Connecticut Compromise, compared to its population?

Which state's representation was most damaged by the Connecticut Compromise, compared to its population?

Which plan do you think is most fair? Why?

**Sources:**

Population data: Census.gov

<https://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/PopulationofStatesandCountiesoftheUnitedStates1790-1990.pdf>

[https://www.census.gov/population/apportionment/data/2010\\_apportionment\\_results.html](https://www.census.gov/population/apportionment/data/2010_apportionment_results.html)

<http://teacherweb.com/CA/DodsonMagnetSchool/TBaumann/3-Redone.pdf>

CT compromise data: Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st\\_United\\_States\\_Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_United_States_Congress)

## Comparing plans in 1789:

There's a saying which claims that comparing apples and oranges is impossible. That's not true! Percentages are one good way of comparing two things, even when they are not similar.

Below, copied from the chart on the last page, are two columns. The first shows each colony's population as a percent of the total population of the new United States. The second shows each colony's representation in the new Congress as a percent of the total members of Congress.

By using a percentage for each measure, we can make a comparison between how influential a state would have been under the Virginia Plan (Population) and under the Connecticut Compromise. This number, called the difference, shows how overrepresented (a positive difference) or underrepresented (a negative difference) a state would be under this system.

Subtract the percent of population from the percent of representation for each state to calculate the difference.

<b>State</b>	<b>Pct. of Representation (VA Compromise)</b>	<b>Pct. of Representation (CT Compromise)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Connecticut	6.6%	7.7%	1.2%
Delaware	1.1%	3.3%	
Georgia	2.2%	3.3%	
Maryland	8.8%	7.7%	
Massachusetts	9.9%	9.9%	
New Hampshire	4.4%	5.5%	
New Jersey	5.5%	6.6%	
New York	8.8%	9.9%	
North Carolina	11.0%	9.9%	
Pennsylvania	12.1%	11.0%	
Rhode Island	2.2%	3.3%	
South Carolina	6.6%	6.6%	
Virginia	20.9%	15.4%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Shade each of the thirteen original states based on whether it received increased representation, decreased representation, or proportional representation from the Connecticut Compromise, compared to population.

Overrepresented: (Green)

Underrepresented: (Red)

Proportionally represented: (Yellow)



## Comparing plans today:

The United States government regularly reviews and revises the population by state and how many Representatives each state deserves. This process is called reapportionment and happens once every ten years based on census data. The last reapportionment was in 2010. Experiment with the data and the map of the United States on the next page. See what you can discover!

State	Population	Pct. of Total	Reps	Pct. of Total	Dif.
Alabama	4,802,982	2.9%	9	3.2%	0.3%
Alaska	721,523	0.4%	3	1.1%	
Arizona	6,412,700	3.9%	11	3.9%	
Arkansas	2,926,229	1.8%	6	2.1%	
California	37,341,989	22.4%	55	19.3%	
Colorado	5,044,930	3.0%	9	3.2%	
Connecticut	3,581,628	2.2%	7	2.5%	
Delaware	900,877	0.5%	3	1.1%	
Florida	18,900,773	11.4%	29	10.2%	
Georgia	9,727,566	5.8%	16	5.6%	
Hawaii	1,366,862	0.8%	4	1.4%	
Idaho	1,573,499	0.9%	4	1.4%	
Illinois	12,864,380	7.7%	20	7.0%	
Indiana	6,501,582	3.9%	11	3.9%	
Iowa	3,053,787	1.8%	6	2.1%	
Kansas	2,863,813	1.7%	6	2.1%	
Kentucky	4,350,606	2.6%	8	2.8%	
Louisiana	4,553,962	2.7%	8	2.8%	
Maine	1,333,074	0.8%	4	1.4%	
Maryland	5,789,929	3.5%	10	3.5%	
Massachusetts	6,559,644	3.9%	11	3.9%	
Michigan	9,911,626	6.0%	16	5.6%	
Minnesota	5,314,879	3.2%	10	3.5%	
Mississippi	2,978,240	1.8%	6	2.1%	
Missouri	6,011,478	3.6%	10	3.5%	
Montana	994,416	0.6%	3	1.1%	

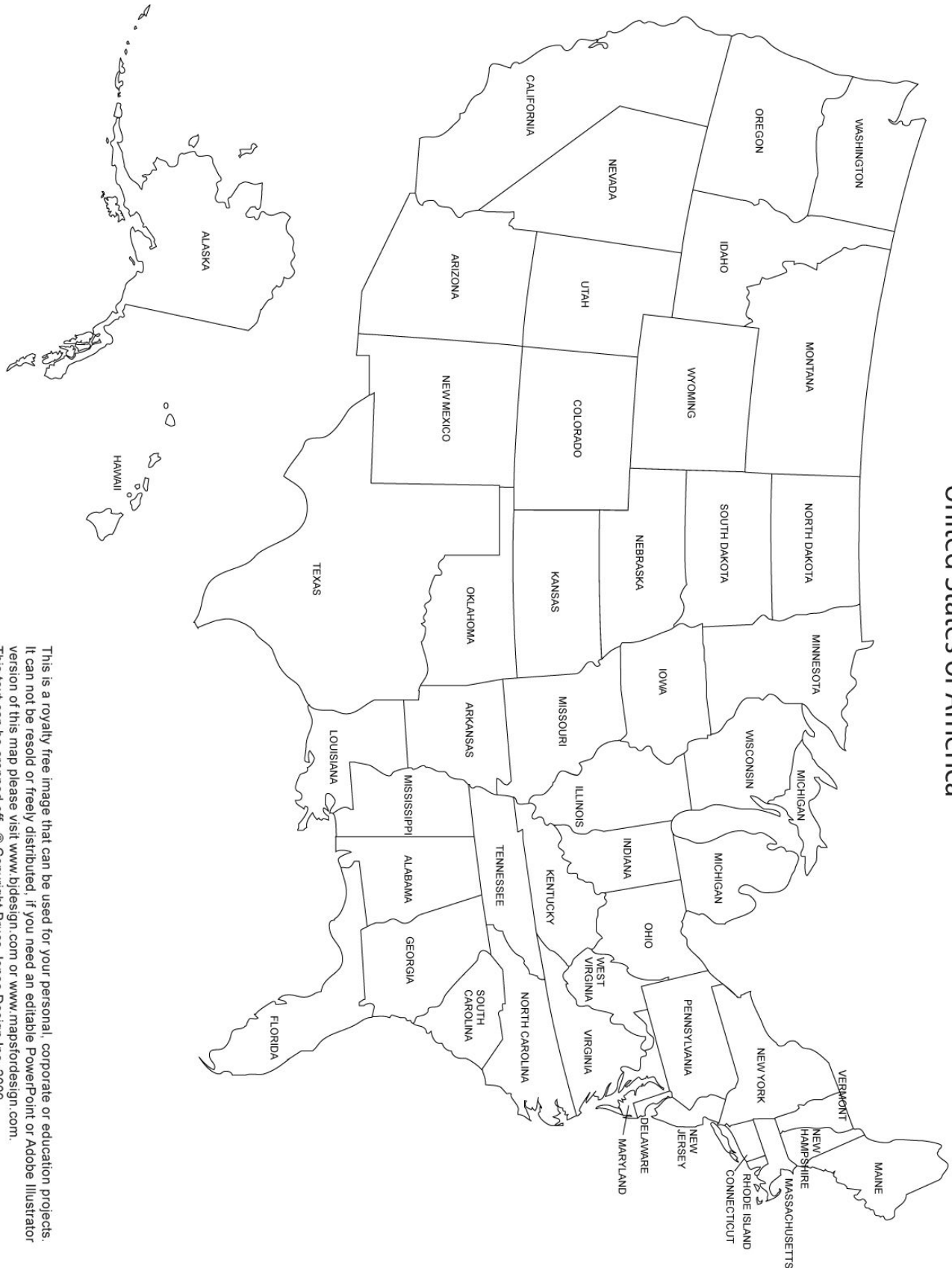
State	Population	Pct. of Total	Reps	Pct. of Total	Dif.
Nebraska	1,831,825	1.1%	5	1.8%	
Nevada	2,709,432	1.6%	6	2.1%	
New Hampshire	1,321,445	0.8%	4	1.4%	
New Jersey	8,807,501	5.3%	14	4.9%	
New Mexico	2,067,273	1.2%	5	1.8%	
New York	19,421,055	11.7%	29	10.2%	
North Carolina	9,565,781	5.7%	15	5.3%	
North Dakota	675,905	0.4%	3	1.1%	
Ohio	11,568,495	7.0%	18	6.3%	
Oklahoma	3,764,882	2.3%	7	2.5%	
Oregon	3,848,606	2.3%	7	2.5%	
Pennsylvania	12,734,905	7.7%	20	7.0%	
Rhode Island	1,055,247	0.6%	4	1.4%	
South Carolina	4,645,975	2.8%	9	3.2%	
South Dakota	819,761	0.5%	3	1.1%	
Tennessee	6,375,431	3.8%	11	3.9%	
Texas	25,268,418	15.2%	38	13.3%	
Utah	2,770,765	1.7%	6	2.1%	
Vermont	630,337	0.4%	3	1.1%	
Virginia	8,037,736	4.8%	13	4.6%	
Washington	6,753,369	4.1%	12	4.2%	
West Virginia	1,859,815	1.1%	5	1.8%	
Wisconsin	5,698,230	3.4%	10	3.5%	
Wyoming	568,300	0.3%	3	1.1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>166,382,974</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Shade each state based on whether it receives increased representation, decreased representation, or proportional representation from the Connecticut Compromise, compared to population.

Overrepresented: (Green)

Underrepresented: (Red)

Proportionally represented: (Yellow)



This is a royalty free image that can be used for your personal, corporate or education projects. It can not be resold or freely distributed. If you need an editable PowerPoint or Adobe Illustrator version of this map please visit [www.bjdesign.com](http://www.bjdesign.com) or [www.mapstoridesign.com](http://www.mapstoridesign.com). This text can be cropped off. © Copyright Bruce Jones Design Inc. 2009