

# **The United States Senate, a Bullwork Against**

## **TYRANNY**

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On July 2, 1776, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress considered and passed the Lee Resolution, which resolved that each of the 13 colonies were “free and independent states.” As representatives of these newly declared countries, the Congress subsequently passed, on July 4, the “Declaration of Independence,” notifying the British that their governance was no longer recognized by these new nations. Under the leadership of the Congress, these countries together fought and won a war of independence.

This victory created a problem. How were these new nations to establish formally a framework for mutual defense against European hegemony? Thus began the long process the end of which was achieved the ratification of the Constitution of the United States.

The nations striving to create a founding document which simultaneously promoted their common interests while protecting each country’s unique way of life was vigorously debated in many details. Agreements were reached which, as James Madison described, were “evidently the result of compromise between the pretensions of the large and the small states.” Throw in the differences of religion and slavery, and it is a miracle that the Constitution was ratified at all. The particular compromise Madison was referring to above is the equal representation of countries in the United States Senate. The small states feared domination by the large states, thus felt need for protection from “the tyranny of the mob,” that is, the ability of large population states to promote their interests at the expense of the small states by force of numbers. Just as the justification for the revolution was Parliamentary refusal to permit representation of the colonies, a means of consent, so did the small states

**demand recognition of the large states in order to provide their consent to ratify the Constitution.**

**Let us now explore a way this process of ratification was thought of by the former colonies. As the Lee Resolution noted, each colony had become a “free and equal” state. A state, country, or nation, is sovereign over its own affairs. The responsibilities of government cannot be “contracted out” without the consent of the people. Each new country had an obligation to ensure that the interests of its citizens would be promoted and protected in the new union. Having much experience with bad and tyrannical government, sovereignty was not going to be surrendered freely. Thus a contract which divided sovereignty was devised. It sought to put checks and balances in the new agreement which discouraged the abuse of power as had been experienced recently from the British, and for those knowledgeable of history, the habit of chronic government abuse rather than the hallmark of security and freedom.**

**Two primary mechanisms exist in the Constitution which protect the interests of small states. The first is the equal representation of states in the Senate, the second is the electoral college, which also dilutes the raw number power of the large states in relation to the small. The Bill of Rights and other amendments also protect the interests of citizens against abuse of power. Today there are advocates for getting rid of the Senate’s equal representation. Yet our culture is one of protecting the weak. Justice is not what the majority says it is, but what is revealed by nature and faith. Thus protection from the majority is a necessity for just government. The equal representation of the states in the United States Senate is but one of many useful bulwarks against government tyranny. If that protection is to be changed or removed, the Constitution provides an amendment process to do so. The fact that little real effort exists for amendment of this particular characteristic is evidence that it is popularly supported. So it must remain.**