

Elbridge Gerry

Massachusetts (large state)

Personal Background

You were born to a wealthy family in Massachusetts in 1744. After graduating from Harvard College, you joined the family merchant and shipping business. You served in the colonial legislature and were an early Patriot. You helped transport goods donated by other colonies when the British closed Boston Harbor. In 1776, you became a delegate to the Continental Congress.

You are known for being somewhat nervous and very serious, without much of a sense of humor. Although you began the convention as a supporter of a strong central government, you fear military and political tyranny and you worry about protecting the rights of citizens under the new government.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention

Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.

Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining a state's representation in the national legislature.

Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be selected by the governors of the states.

Sign the Constitution?

No. You want a bill of rights and other changes to better protect liberty.