

John Dickinson

Delaware (small state)

Personal Background

The son of a prosperous farmer, you were born in Maryland in 1732. Later, your family moved to Delaware, where you were educated by private tutors. After studying law in Philadelphia and England, you became a prominent lawyer in Philadelphia and served in the Delaware and Pennsylvania assemblies. When the Revolution broke out, you looked for peaceful ways to resolve the conflict. At the Second Continental Congress, you refused to sign the Declaration of Independence. You withdrew from politics for a few years. Later, you were elected to Congress. You served as president of the Delaware Supreme Executive Council, as president of Pennsylvania, and as Delaware's delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention

Issue 1: You propose that the national legislature should have two houses. In the first house, all states should have an equal vote. In the second house, representation should be based on the amount of taxes a state pays to the national government.

Issue 2: You believe that slaves should be counted only for determining a state's representation in the national legislature.

Issue 3: You want each of the 13 states to nominate its "best citizen" for the national executive, and then have the national legislature choose from among the candidates.

Sign the Constitution? Yes.