

At the time of the constitutional convention, there were federalists in favor of the constitution and anti-federalists against the constitution. While both groups of people wanted to protect liberties, they had different paths. The anti-federalists thought the constitution would give too much power to the federal government and weaken the states, therefore encroaching on our liberties.

The federalists and the anti-federalists needed a way to compromise, and the Bill of Rights was that. The constitution gave power to the federal government, while the Bill of Rights gave protection to the individual.

In June of 1789, James Madison proposed the Bill of Rights. This contained 17 amendments, but it got changed to only contain 12 by Congress. This removed the 5 that limited state's government. Five states (NY, RI, NC, VA, MA) only agreed to ratify the constitution on the promise that the bill of rights would follow insuring individual liberties. On October 2nd, 1789, this draft of the Bill of Rights was sent to all the states, and by December 15, 1791, 3/4 of the states agreed on 10 of these, which became known as the Bill of Rights. This was a great achievement in diplomacy.

Ben Franklin was a Whig and a printer, and he was strongly in favor of the freedom of the press. However, Ben Franklin was a federalist and for the constitution, and did not feel the Bill of Rights was necessary. He also refused to reprint the 45th issue of the North Briton, the most controversial issue about criticizing King George III's speech praising the treaty ending the Seven Years War.

Alexander Hamilton was a federalist, but clearly against the Bill of Rights. He wrote 51 out of the 85 federalist papers, and they were essays about getting Americans to get on board with the Constitution. He was also the first Secretary of Treasury, underneath George Washington.

James Madison was a federalist who didn't think the Bill of Rights was necessary. But, after correspondence with Jefferson, he was convinced it did need to exist. He wrote the first draft of the Bill of Rights, containing 17 clauses. He argued very strongly in it's support.

Although the governor of Virginia was sometimes against the freedom of the press by censoring it, he was still instrumental to Virginia ratifying the constitution once the Bill of Rights was added.

Thomas Jefferson was living in France as the US Minister to France. He was also writing letters to James Madison, and was influential to James Madison switching to being for the Bill of Rights. He was also our third president.

Arthur Lee was a prolific writer and influential publicist for colonial rights. He wrote 170 essays and letters, his most famous one in 1774 where he argued about taxation without representation. His solution was a colonial bill of rights.

Richard Henry Lee valued the freedom of the press, and eventually got appointed to write an address to Canadian residents in October of 1774. Part included the freedom of the press, and it was the first time people had declared the freedom of the press to be a human right.

John Wilkes was the anonymous publisher of the North Briton, a radical newspaper, which was critical of the government. It resulted in John Wilkes getting arrested, mostly due to Issue 45. He was charged with libel and became famous. He won his court case, and "Wilkes and Liberty!" became a slogan for freedom of speech. Although he was English, he was followed by the founding fathers and other Americans, including Arthur Lee.

In order to pass the Bill of Rights to add to the constitution a lot of debate, diplomacy and compromise were required. Two parties had conflicting ideas about the constitution and the Bill of Rights. The Federalists believed in a more powerful federal government, did not want the Bill of Rights, and liked the constitution as it was written. On the contrary, the Anti-Federalist wanted the Bill of Rights passed so less power went to the government and more liberties were granted to the people. Both groups gave speeches to congress, wrote essays and letters in newspapers. The Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers were anonymous essays, almost a written debate, to express the groups opinions.

Another example of debate is the numerous letters between Jefferson and Madison. Madison was opposed to the Bill of Rights as he felt there was no real need for it. Jefferson was able to convince Madison that without the Bill of Rights the constitution would never get ratified. Realizing this, as an act of diplomacy, Madison then wrote the Bill of Rights and became one of its strongest advocates.

Another compromise was the amount of clauses in the bill of rights had to be reduced from 17 to 12. This was done to remove some of the power that the federal government held over the states. This also made more anti-federalists side with the Bill of Rights, as they believed in more power at the state level.

A final example of diplomacy was the fact that several states wouldn't ratify the constitution without the promise of the Bill of Rights following. Without the states agreeing, the constitution would not have been ratified. They would have had to redraft the entire constitution. This disagreement was solved by adding the Bill of Rights to the constitution, so that once the constitution was passed, the Bill of Rights would ensue immediately.

This impact of passing the Bill of Rights thus giving us The Freedom of the Press is that America is a country where the government doesn't control the media. Because of free press, news sources can post anything they want without repercussions from the government. This makes it much harder to find unbiased news sources, a big challenge in today's society. Another impact of passing the Bill of Rights was that the founders didn't have to start over with a new constitution. If this had happened, there's the possibility that the country could have divided over this discourse. But instead America is a unified country.

word - The North Briton no. 45 Appendix published  
word - Letter to the inhabitants of the Province of Quebec sent  
word - Constitutional Convention Begins  
word - Constitutional Convention Ends  
word - Constitution sent to states to be ratified  
word - Delaware ratified the Constitution  
word - Pennsylvania ratified the Constitution  
word - New Jersey ratified the Constitution  
word - Georgia ratified the Constitution  
word - Connecticut ratified the Constitution  
word - Massachusetts ratified the Constitution  
word - Maryland ratified the Constitution  
word - South Carolina ratified the Constitution  
word - New Hampshire ratified the Constitution  
word - Patrick Henry's Speech to Congress  
word - Virginia ratified the Constitution (Constitution Ratified)  
word - New York ratified the Constitution  
word - First Draft of the Bill of Rights composed  
word - Bill of Rights sent to states to be ratified  
word - North Carolina ratified the Constitution  
word - Rhode Island ratified the Constitution  
word - Bill of Rights Ratified