

from each state would be based on the state's population or its wealth. The legislature would have the power to make laws "in all cases to which the separate states are incompetent [unable]."

As well as having its own distinct powers, each branch could check the powers of the other branches in certain circumstances. This system of "checks and balances" is a way of controlling the power of government. As James Madison said, "All power in human hands is liable to be abused." The Founders designed the new government to limit that abuse.

Delegates from the small states strongly objected to the Virginia Plan because it gave more power to states with larger populations. In response to the Virginia Plan, New Jersey delegate William Paterson presented an alternative. Like the Articles, the **New Jersey Plan** called for a single-house congress in which each state had an equal vote. Small states supported the New Jersey Plan.

The Great Compromise Emotions ran high as the delegates struggled to solve the problem of representation in the legislature. In early July, a committee led by Roger Sherman and other delegates from Connecticut offered a deal known as the **Great Compromise**. Sherman proposed:

PRIMARY SOURCE

“That the proportion of suffrage in the first branch should be according to the respective numbers of free inhabitants, and that in the second branch or Senate, each State should have one vote and no more.”

—Roger Sherman, June 11, 1787

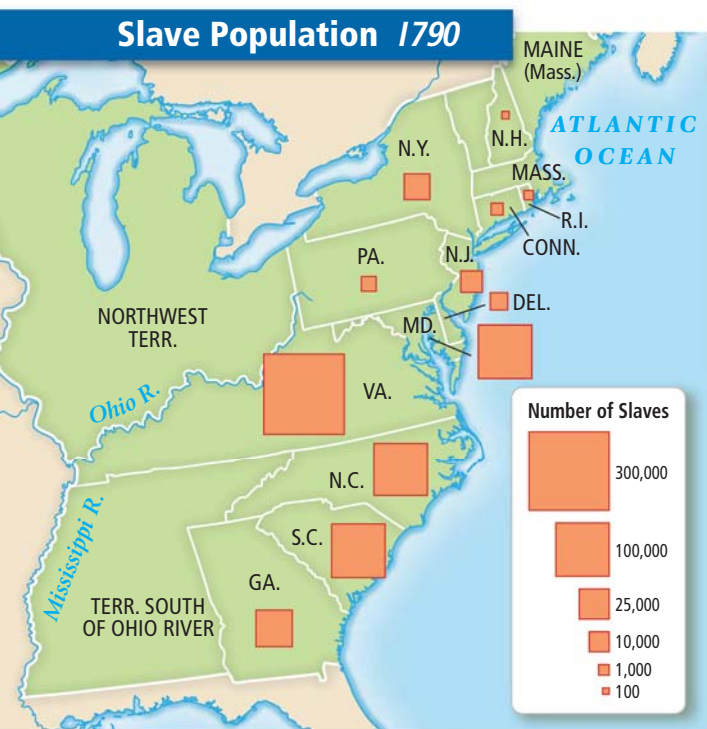
In other words, to satisfy the smaller states, each state would have an equal number of votes in the Senate. To satisfy the larger states, representation in the House of Representatives was set according to state populations. On July 16, 1787, the convention passed the plan.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS Describe the major challenges of the Convention in creating a stronger national government.

Challenges Over Slavery

KEY QUESTION How did the Constitutional Convention compromise over slavery?

Because representation in the House of Representatives would be based on the population of each state, the delegates had to decide who would be counted in that population. For example, were slaves to be counted as part of the population?



Connect Geography & History

- Place** Which state would have the greatest interest in having slaves counted as part of their population for purposes of representation?
- Clarify** Why did the North and the South have differing opinions on whether or not slaves should be counted as part of a state's population?