**The Antifederalists, the First Congress, and the First Parties**

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It is regularly argued that the ratification of the federal Constitution and the formation of the Federalist and Jeffersonian Republican parties marked points of significant discontinuity between politics before the new Constitution and thereafter. In this paper, we argue that there was significant continuity in politics in this period. In particular, we argue that the antifederalist representatives in the First Congress helped create such continuity in both debate and voting. Issues that arose in the First Congress were regularly tied to constitutional questions, sometimes explicitly so, as in passage of the constitutional amendments and in the question of executive removal powers. At other times, notably in debate and action over Hamilton’s fiscal plan, the constitutional issues formed the basis for interpreting the particular policies at hand. We argue that the antifederalists forged such links in debate, helping to establish the grounds for the opposition of Madison and his supporters to Hamiltonian goals. Moreover, their votes made up a substantial proportion of that opposition, and they served as part of the coalition that eventually formed the Jeffersonian Republican party. We also argue that the formation of new institutions like political parties needs to be understood not only in terms of the interests and political goals of their creators, but also in terms of the ideas and principles that motivated their actions.

**INTRODUCTION**

I never submitted the whole system of my opinions to the creed of any party of men whatever in religion, in philosophy, in politics, or in anything else where I was capable of thinking for myself. Such addiction is the last degradation of a free and moral agent. If I could not go to heaven but with a party, I would not go there at all . . .

Thomas Jefferson to Francis Hopkinson, March 13, 1789

Were parties here divided merely by a greediness for office, as in England, to take a part with either would be unworthy of a reasonable or moral man. But where the principle of difference is as substantial, and as strongly pronounced as between the republicans and monocrats of our country, I hold it as honorable to take a firm and decided part, and as immoral to pursue a middle line, as between the parties of honest men and rogues, into which every country is divided.

Jefferson to William B. Giles, Dec. 31, 1795

**M**ost studies of the First Congress have been motivated by the desire to explain the rapid and unanticipated development of the first national political

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parties. While this is certainly an important question, focusing on party development has distorted the picture of the politics of the immediate postratification period and has led to a serious misunderstanding of the continuities between the politics of the 1780s and those of the 1790s. The distortion can be attributed in part to a concentration on institutional development that excludes political ideology. One aim of this paper is to demonstrate that an explanation centered on the relation between ideology and institutions is more complete than those offered by alternative approaches.

The central argument of this paper is that there were significant continuities in national politics between the controversies surrounding ratification and those of the first few Congresses, and indeed that the rise of national parties cannot be explained without taking this continuity into account. Evidence of continuity is to be found particularly in the debates of the First Congress where antifederalist representatives played an important role, not only in the early discussions of constitutional issues left unresolved by ratification, but also in shaping the response to Alexander Hamilton's fiscal plan. Hamilton's opponents saw his plan in the light of an understanding of republicanism that had been articulated by the antifederalists during the ratification campaign. The plan was interpreted as an attempt to create a partisan financial elite, which would subvert the new and fragile republic in the direction of aristocracy and monarchy. Antifederalists had warned that the government under the new Constitution would have this tendency. The central question of the ratification debate was whether republican government could be viable on a national scale. This "regime question" remained open in the 1790s, although its focus shifted from the merits of the Constitution itself to which of the potential tendencies within the Constitution's framework would prove dominant. Antifederalist representatives played a central role in their roll-call voting behavior as well as in the expression of their political beliefs. While their votes were generally cast on the losing side, the minority was typically quite large, and antifederalists provided much of that opposition. In matters of fiscal policy, they often joined with James Madison and his allies and, thus, played a major role in the transition that led to the eventual creation of the Republican party.

This view contrasts sharply with the dominant view that ratification defeated the antifederalists once and for all and opened a new chapter in American national politics. There were echoes of the old debates in the First Congress, to be sure, but these were mainly confined, in this view, to the "housewarming" tasks that were needed to get the nation underway. Even the final form of the Bill of

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1 For the view that the antifederalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans were both adherents of a "country" or classical republican "persuasion," and thus that there was significant ideological similarity between them see Banning (1978). Additional evidence to support this view can be found in McCoy (1980).
Rights was less the product of continuing antifederalist influence than the result of clever maneuverings by James Madison to minimize the extent of compromise with them.

As ratification marked one point of major discontinuity, the introduction of Hamilton’s fiscal plan in the First Congress marked a second. In this view, Hamilton’s plan set events in motion that culminated in the creation of the first modern political parties, dividing the heretofore allies in ratification, Hamilton on one side and Madison and Jefferson on the other. Indeed, most studies of the First Congress are in fact studies of the origins of “modern” political parties, wholly new inventions that ran strongly against prevailing mores, and even morals, and marked at least as great a discontinuity in democratic politics as the Constitution itself did. Many accounts of the new parties cite the difficulties in the First and Second Congresses in grappling with Hamilton’s plan as leading to the slow realization that some form of extralegislative organizing was useful, if not necessary. In effect, a new era of American politics, unrelated to the ratification period, was initiated with Hamilton’s plan; controversy spread to a wider public and in new directions with disputes over relations with England and France; and the process culminated in genuine partisanship in presidential politics, leading men to place a high priority on the electoral success of parties as such (see Chambers 1963; Charles 1956; Cunningham 1957; Formisano 1981, 1983; Goodman 1964, 1967). Those who have analyzed voting patterns come to much the same conclusions. Voting was effectively unstructured in the First Congress, with voting blocs developing only gradually. These blocs were initially mostly sectional in character, and only later did “partisan” cleavages develop. Thus, analysts conclude that there was no continuity between political divisions over ratification and those divisions that were later expressed in congressional voting alignments associated with fiscal and foreign policy issues.

This conventional interpretation, however, leaves important questions unanswered. While we agree that fiscal, foreign, and other policy debates did lead to party formation, we question whether these issues were new. National fiscal policy, funding of the war debt, and banking were all prominent political issues long before the Constitutional Convention (Hammond 1957; Jillson and Wilson, forthcoming). Whether to ally more closely with Britain or France reflected divisions that extended back nearly to the Revolution. It is therefore unlikely that Hamilton’s plan, rearousing old concerns, would produce entirely new lines of cleavage. And even if they did, why were these financial and foreign policy issues so divisive as to

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1Buel (1972) agrees that Hamilton’s program marked a new beginning in American politics but stresses the importance of ideological factors.

2Bell (1973); Hoadley (1980, 1986); Libby (1912, 1913). Henderson (1973, 1974) and Ryan (1971) identify sectionally based blocs that developed early. The exception is Bowling (1968) who sees a pro-administration and an anti-administration bloc with the latter solidly based on the antifederalists in the first session and becoming more sectional as southern federalists joined.
lead men who shared strongly antiparty views to begin the process that culminated in the organization of national political parties? Addressing these questions has led us to a new interpretation.

We believe that, while the Constitution and the Republican and Federalist parties were indeed new organizational forms, there was great continuity nonetheless from the 1780s through the end of the century. The political thought of those who became the Republicans owed much to the antifederalists. Equally important, the formation of opposition to Hamilton and eventually to his Federalist party owed much to the actions of antifederalists in the First Congress, as evidenced by their votes on the floor of Congress. Antifederalist representatives made a critical contribution to the legislative conflict that led Jefferson and Madison to organize the Republican party.

Moreover, Republicans were able to organize, not so much in spite of their antiparty views, as because of them. They understood themselves to be fighting against an antirepublican party, on behalf of the people as a whole, and only until the political enemy was defeated. Consequently, their efforts at political organization could escape the usual condemnation of parties. The ideology of the Jeffersonian Republicans provides the context within which their partisan activities make sense; it explains their opposition to the policies of the first administration; and it bears a striking resemblance to antifederalist thought. Investigating the continuity between the antifederalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans is thus a commentary on the relation between ideology and institutional development.

Earlier interpretations have emphasized one or the other but have not explored their relation. One group of studies begins with the premise that parties are groups of men united either by their adherence to fundamental principles or by enduring common interests (Bowers 1926; Henry 1891; Hildreth 1856; Parrington 1930; and Beard 1928; Binkley [1943] 1962; Dauer 1953; Main 1973, respectively). Since parties are understood as natural and inevitable expressions of these underlying differences, no explanation is offered for how men with antiparty views might have justified their own partisan activities, or for why it is that new sorts of party organizations began to emerge in the new republic. Moreover, continuities

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4 Parties were condemned as "partial" in two senses; as representing the interests of a part to the detriment of the good of the whole and as biased in their judgment because acting in their own case.

5 The bulk of the historical research on the relation between the antifederalists and Republicans has focused on the socioeconomic composition of the groups supporting or opposing ratification and supporting either Federalists or Republicans. Generally, the evidence suggests a high degree of correspondence between the political affiliations of these groups, (variously identified as "cosmopolitan" and "localist," agrarian and commercial, etc.) in the 1780s and 1790s. In addition, a considerably higher proportion of antifederalists joined the Republicans than joined the Federalists in the early stages of the party conflict, and Republican ranks were later swelled by several groups that had previously supported the Federalists. See Dauer 1953; Fischer 1965; Main 1973; and Risjord 1969. While this evidence creates a presumption in favor of the position that the conflicts of the 1790s were not entirely new, it does not address the question of the influence of the ratification controversy on party development or of the influence of the antifederalists as such. The ideological connection is most fully elaborated in Banning (1978, 92–125).
of political cleavages are established simply by noting similarities in the composition of competing groups over time, without consideration of historical linkages in the actions of politicians arranging active groups, alignments, and realignments. In short, when party strife is viewed either as a contest of "high" principles or as a contest of "low" interests, the politics drops out of the picture.

An alternative approach, and the currently dominant one, places party development within the larger process of political modernization and nation building. For those taking this approach, there is less concern with continuities of political issues than with the institutional characteristics that make the Federalists and especially the Republicans the first political parties. A party is understood to be a distinctively modern institution fulfilling specific political functions. But what enabled men who still conceived of parties as dangerous political forces to form an effective political party? After all, national parties might have failed to develop despite their usefulness. One must still explain why the Republicans successfully rose to the challenge by creating a "modern" political institution in a manner that surpassed the partisan efforts of the Federalists.

The emphasis on the Republican party as the first modern party has obscured the importance of its origin in the ongoing ideological controversy over establishing national republicanism on a secure foundation. It is argued that the Republicans organized in response to political necessities, simply rationalizing their activities "after the fact" (Chambers 1963, 43–44); that the antifederalists disappeared after ratification, and that the partisan divisions in the First Congress reflect controversies over particular interests unrelated to the principled disputes of the ratification campaign or earlier political controversies. These are the claims that are challenged here.

We claim instead that the organization of the Jeffersonian Republicans would not have developed as it did without the context of the continuing conflict over republican ideology. Through an analysis of the debates of the First Congress, we will show in section 2 the role of antifederalist legislators in keeping the "regime" question alive and in interpreting Hamilton's program as an attack on republican institutions. Through an analysis of roll-call voting in the First Congress, we will show in section 3 that antifederalist representatives tended to vote together on constitutional questions; that they tended to vote together in opposition to Hamilton's proposals, lending support to the contention that those proposals were interpreted as constitutional in scope; and that, while they were a small proportion of the

4Older institutional forms that originated in societies with fixed social orders were gradually replaced in America with forms more appropriate to a society becoming democratic in the broad sense. Democratization involves an increasing emphasis on elections. It is for this reason that the Jeffersonian Republicans are often considered to be the first "modern" political party, because they were the first to turn, even if tentatively, to the electoral arena. In addition, some authors argue that the Constitution itself provided new institutional conditions conducive to party development (see Bell 1973; Chambers 1963; and Rudolph 1956).

5For some alternative explanations see Buel (1972, 91–92), Cunningham (1957, 258), and Hofstadter (1969, 4, 8, 18).
Congress, they formed a significant proportion of the opposition forces that Hamilton's supporters were barely able to defeat.

**ANALYSIS OF DEBATES**

Jefferson and Madison took the first steps toward building the Republican party in response to the alarming events of the First Congress. According to the standard interpretation, these events were entirely unprecedented.

The first session of Congress was devoted to establishing the executive departments and the judicial branch, and to other housewarming chores. It was not until 1790 and 1791 that Hamilton presented his proposals, and a new political era opened (Chambers 1963, 36).

Yet, the claim that there was a radical discontinuity between the politics of 1787–1788 and the politics of 1790–1791 deserves to be greeted with some skepticism. First, almost every issue that was consequential in the development of the first parties in the 1790s had been hotly contested, often in strikingly similar form, in the Continental Congress. Second, many of the same individuals participated in the ratification controversy (and in the Continental Congress) and in the development of the first parties shortly thereafter. That these events were entirely unrelated is implausible.

Jillson and Wilson (forthcoming) devote a chapter of their study of the Continental Congress, for example, to the highly circumscribed role members of the Continental Congress were willing to grant executive officers (see also Thach 1923, esp. pp. 55–75). They also give considerable attention to conflicts over economic issues that mirror Hamilton's proposals nearly a decade later. These included debate over the formation of the superintendent of finance (the analogue to the secretary of the treasury in the First Congress) in 1781, and continuing debate during the first half of the 1780s over Superintendent Robert Morris's "Report on the Public Credit," national debt, assumption of state debts, and even the formation of a National Bank (with Morris's supporters in the Congress led by James Wilson [PA] and Hamilton). Relations with France and even John Jay in his role as secretary of foreign affairs were significant concerns in this period (albeit in this case in negotiations with Spain), rehearsing partisan conflict over the Jay Treaty a decade later. Even the temporary and permanent location of a home for the Congress was debated on essentially the same terms as it would be in the First Congress.

These issues, and the frequent stalemate in resolving them due to the structure of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation, helped set the stage for the Constitutional Convention. That is, stalemate over such basic and, as it would turn out, recurring issues was a significant force in raising the "regime question" of the feasibility of Confederation. The failures of the Confederation led to the proposed new constitution, and the ratification debate raised the regime question in a new form, shifting its focus to the viability of a stronger, federal republic. With many in the First Congress having served in the Continental Congress and virtually all having figured prominently on one side or the other of ratification, it
should be no surprise that unsettled constitutional issues and recurring substantive issues should have been understood by all in terms of this regime question and the debate over ratification so recently concluded.

Thus, we argue that the "housewarming chores" kept alive, and were understood as, issues raised in the ratification debates; the distribution of power between the departments of government, between the general and state governments, and between northern and southern interests, for example. Hamilton's proposals were interpreted in the context of the divisions over these concerns, just as were Morris's similar plans in 1783. And by the end of the First Congress, the divisiveness in the House had itself become a cause for concern.

The antifederalists, of course, might have died out as a political force on the national level even though the general issues of the ratification controversy persisted. But, the ratification compromise, with its promise of amendments, prompted antifederalists to seek representation in the First Congress. They succeeded in capturing 14 of the 65 seats (or 22%, see appendix I). Many antifederalists also saw a role for themselves beyond the fight for amendments because they believed they had a duty to try to check the more dangerous tendencies of the Constitutional system (see for example Lee 1825, 94–95, 98; Aldrich, forthcoming).

The analysis of the debates will provide evidence for our argument, showing that ideological concerns of the ratification controversy remained particularly salient on constitutional questions and on Hamilton's plan. In section 3, we will show that the ideological concerns voiced by the antifederalists were backed by their actions in roll-call voting. In these two sections we will also show how antifederalist concerns over the regime question contributed to dividing those in the First Congress who had so recently been united in support of the new constitution. The antifederalists' votes combined with the antiadministration Federalists to create a bloc, led by Madison, with sufficient strength to challenge and, at times, temporarily block enactment of Hamilton's plan. It was the coalition of antifederalists and antiadministration Federalists that Jefferson and Madison used as a basis for building the Republican party.

During the First Congress, antifederalist representatives were a vocal minority who held their share of committee appointments and who made their presence felt, often prompting debates in the House that closely resembled ratification debates. Even seemingly noncontroversial proposals were greeted by antifederalist objections or treated as constitutional questions, perhaps as a result of excessive fear that dangerous precedents would be established. For example, Aedanus Burke (SC) and Thomas Tucker (SC) objected to a resolution that the president should

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1 The usual argument is that the antifederalists died because their issue died (Bassett 1906, 42; Chambers 1963, 29; Libby 1912, 294). The implication is that the antifederalists were defined by a simple opposition to the Constitution. In fact, they shared a complex understanding of republican politics and an abiding interest in the future of the Union (see Kenyon 1966; Storing 1981b).

2 Antifederal slates of candidates for the First Congress were nominated in several states (Paullin 1904).
declare a day of Thanksgiving at the close of the first session because it mimicked European customs, because it was an interference by the House in a religious matter, and because, if there was to be a day of Thanksgiving, it should be by state authority. Thomas Sumter (SC) and Tucker argued that the House should not relinquish its authority to the president in the matter of the appointment of commissioners to deal with the Indians. Even the question of providing plates and furniture to the president was treated as a constitutional one.

Almost every issue before the House was debated partially in terms of its effect on the character of the republic. Many federalists also seemed to be acutely aware of the importance of the proceedings for the fate of the Constitutional experiment. Fisher Ames (MA) remarked that “an ill administration of the new constitution was more to be feared, as inimical to the liberties of the people, than any hostility from the principles of the constitution.” One aspect of this shared self-consciousness was the concern that the House be free from factional divisiveness, particularly along sectional lines. In devising a revenue law, the first business of the first session, representatives were pleased that such divisiveness had not materialized. Madison and Ames congratulated the House on the disposition shown to “conduct our business with harmony and concert.”

But the harmony of the House was disrupted when it was proposed that the president have sole authority to remove the heads of executive departments from office. The debate produced the familiar federalist and antifederalist arguments and some of the passion associated with them. One representative charged that those who were too jealous of presidential power would ruin the government. Another voiced his suspicion that those favoring presidential removal power were deliberately violating the Constitution. A third charged that the question had been ingeniously handled so as to settle the principle before establishing the Treasury Department.

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11Ibid. Aug. 11, 1789, 690–97.
13Ibid. March 26, 1790; May 3, 1790; Jan. 26, 1790. On the Post Office and delegation of authority to the President, see ibid. April 13, June 16, July 8, and July 22, 1790. Elbridge Gerry (MA) argued that Congress has no authority to pass legislation requiring state officers to take an oath supporting the Constitution, and that argument included the standard attack on the “sweeping clause,” ibid. May 6, 1789, 266.
14Lienesch (1988, chaps. 6, 7) explains what people on both sides expected of the political future during this difficult transitional period. There was no great confidence on either side that the constitutional experiment would succeed.
15Annals, May 9, 1789, 297.
17Ibid. June 25, 1789, 599.
18Ibid. June 18, 1789, 545–46.
19Ibid. June 18, 1789, 529–32.
It was acknowledged that this question was essentially the same as that raised by ratification.\(^2\) The opponents of the bill recalled antifederalist fears: that the power of the government would be expanded by legislative interpretation of the obscure language of the Constitution\(^2\) and that the government would become a monarchy with all of its concomitant evils.\(^2\) They envisioned a coterie of ministers dependent on the president and intruding into the legislature, as in England, as the ultimate result of the removal clause.\(^2\) Gerry argued in characteristic antifederalist fashion that presidential removal power would be consistent with a hereditary monarchy, but would be dangerous here, since we lack the safeguards of monarchical systems.\(^2\) (Roll-call votes on presidential removal power are described in appendix II and in section III as votes C1–C3.)

The objection to establishing ministers in the British style was particularly pronounced with respect to the Treasury Department. A Treasury ministry would corrupt the legislature and produce a system of favoritism. A clause in the bill establishing the Treasury Department that would make it the secretary’s duty to “digest and report plans” provoked considerable debate. Even to permit the secretary of the treasury to report revenue plans to the House would be “laying the foundation for an aristocracy or a detestable monarchy.”\(^2\) There was also considerable concern with personal corruption in the Treasury Department. A bill proposed by Burke was passed prohibiting treasury officers’ involvement in speculation, commerce, etc.\(^2\) All of this concern predates Hamilton’s accession to the treasury and his funding proposals. It indicates a predisposition to see his actions and those proposals as a manifestation of the general dangerous tendencies of the Treasury Department, as it was organized, to produce corruption and legislative faction and to hasten the rise of a monarchy or aristocracy on the ruins of the republic.\(^2\)

During the ratification campaign, antifederalists had argued that the constitutional provision for representation in the House was insufficient to guard against the domination of the government by an aristocratic party hostile to the interests of the people as a whole. “Party” most often referred to social divisions, “orders,” “classes or descriptions of men,” or “political opinions” associated with those classes. The

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\(^{20}\)Ibid. June 18, 1789, 533.

\(^{21}\)Ibid. June 17, 1789, 502, 508; June 18, 1789, 513–16.

\(^{22}\)Ibid. June 18, 1789, 549.

\(^{23}\)Ibid. June 17, 1789, 487, 490; June 18, 1789, 519, 534ff.

\(^{24}\)Ibid. June 19, 1789, 575.

\(^{25}\)Ibid. June 25, 1789, 593, 606; May 19, 1789, 388. The alternative was to allow him only to prepare and report estimates of the public revenue and expenditures.

\(^{26}\)Ibid. June 30, 1789, 611.

\(^{27}\)The organization of the judiciary also occasioned a debate along federalist-antifederalist lines. Just as antifederalists had argued against concurrent powers of taxation, they argued against the establishment of inferior federal courts as threatening to the preservation of liberty and of the state governments, ibid. Aug. 24, Aug. 29, Aug. 31, 1789.
natural aristocracy, the natural democracy, the merchants, farmers, manufacturers, etc., all had legitimate though partial interests which must be balanced in the legislative process. The prospects of meeting this condition in a consolidated government, with few representatives and a wide variety of interests to be represented, was very slim. The democratic class, the "substantial yeomanry" of the country, would be unable to protect their interests. Antifederalists were also concerned that the interests of southern states would be sacrificed to an overbearing northern majority.

In addition to the problem of balancing parties with legitimate claims, checks had to be provided against a "junto of unprincipled men," a faction of aristocrats seeking to further their own private interests and ambitions. To empower executive ministers, particularly in matters of national finance, was to create the temptation to corrupt the legislative process. Democratic deliberation might then be replaced by an alliance between executive policy makers and wealthy legislators with a personal stake in the government's financial policies. The House would not include enough members of the democratic classes to check this development. For those who were critical of the composition of the House, the Treasury Department seemed to be a real source of danger.

The debates on amendments to the Constitution might be expected to provide an even more striking example of a continuation of the Federalist-antifederalist divisions into the First Congress. But the House divided into three groups, and the issue was fought out largely on procedural grounds. One group was composed of Federalists unsympathetic to amendments, one of antifederalists, and the third of Federalists following Madison's lead. Madison's strategy was to pass amendments to safeguard individual rights but to leave the powers of the government intact and avoid reopening a full consideration of the Constitution. He hoped to effectively kill any movement for a second constitutional convention by satisfying disaffected constituents in this limited manner.

When Madison first presented his proposals on June 8, 1789, the first two groups joined in urging a postponement. On July 21, the two Federalist groups allied and referred Madison's proposals to a select committee over antifederalist objections that all amendments proposed by the state ratifying conventions should


30"Where there is a small representation a sufficient number to carry any measure, may, with ease, be influenced by bribes, offices and civilities; they may easily form private juntas, and outdoor meetings agree on measures, and carry them by silent votes." "Letters from the Federal Farmer," III, in Storing 1981a, 2.8.33. See also Centinel, I, in Storing 1981a, 2.7.24; "Letters from the Federal Farmer," VII, in Storing 1981a, 2.8.97–99; G. Livingston, "Debates in the New York Convention," in Kenyon 1966, 391.

31Annals, June 8, 1789, 432–33.
be considered in a Committee of the Whole. By effectively limiting consideration to Madison's proposals, the federalists thwarted antifederalist efforts to secure substantial changes in the Constitution. Nonetheless, the antifederalists fought a persistent and consistently losing battle that generated some heated debate, recapitulating arguments of the ratification campaign.  

The antifederalists were bitterly disappointed with the outcome of the amendment debates. Burke called the amendments "froth."  

Senator Richard Henry Lee (VA), unwilling to give up, wrote to Patrick Henry that, at the next election, representatives should be instructed to push for further amendments, but the issue was not revived (Lee 1825, 102). Several attempts were made in August to pass substantial amendments, but all failed (see appendix II and section III, votes C5–C7).

The organization of executive departments and amendments are the two items of business that could be considered as completing the Constitution. With these issues settled, one might expect the intensity of the debates to diminish as the House turned to policy matters not directly related to the character of the government. But, the last major matter of the first session, the location of the capital, raised the rhetoric in the House to a new pitch. The question was considered to be a crucial test of the capacity of the general government to resolve equitably the conflicting legitimate interests of each section, in part because this issue had been unresolved in the Continental Congress. To some extent, this issue was important because it was one of more or less pure, unalloyed interests that were quite different from beliefs about the nature and purpose of the republican regime. In part, then, for this very reason, representatives warned that an unjust decision would lead to a dissolution of the Union.  

Considerable alarm was raised when it was learned that the eastern members had caucused before the debate in the House and decided on a temporary capital in New York with a permanent capital on the Susquehanna. Such behavior was said to be an infringement on the right of free debate and a partisan effort to control the legislature:

Are the Eastern members to dictate in this business and fix the seat of government of the United States? Why not also fix the principles of government? . . . This looks like aristocracy, not the united, but the partial voice of America is to decide . . .

Madison reminded the House of his earlier praise of the spirit of harmony during the debate on the tonnage bill and then remarked that Virginia would not have joined the Union if she could have seen the proceedings now.  

It was, of course, the antifederalists who had predicted that southern interests would be sacrificed to

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33Ibid. Aug. 15, 1789, 745.
34Ibid. Aug. 27, 1789, 788–89; Sept. 3, 1789, 855.
36Ibid. Sept. 3, 1789, 857.
a northern party, and several members reminded the House of that fact.\textsuperscript{37} The experience of the first session, then, did little to allay the anxiety of the members. The tendency to treat every question as involving the fate of republicanism and of the Union persisted.

The second session was largely devoted to Hamilton's First Report on the Public Credit which contained a plan for funding the debt without discriminating between its present and original holders and for assuming the debts of the states. Hamilton and his supporters considered establishing sound public credit crucial in creating a firm foundation for the new government. Hamilton wrote that "the individual and aggregate property of the citizens of the United States . . . their character as a people; the cause of good government: all depend on sound public credit."\textsuperscript{38} Ames said that any attempt to fund the debt that interfered with the rights of contract would destroy the liberties of the people, violate the Constitution, and eventually dissolve the social compact.\textsuperscript{39} There were warnings that, if the issue were not equitably resolved, the diversity and intensity of public opinion on the question and the differences of interest between creditors of the states and of the general government would create destructive factions among the people.\textsuperscript{40}

The opponents of the plan were no less concerned with its effect on "the cause of good government." They argued that a permanently funded debt is incompatible with republicanism. In England, they said, funding was intended to create a moneyed interest to support a political party in opposing the landed interest. The funding plan would centralize wealth geographically and in the hands of the few, while interest payments would be provided by taxes on the "honest and hardworking part of the community."\textsuperscript{41} Speculators stood to benefit most by the plan.\textsuperscript{42} From an antifederalist point of view, the plan was consonant with the tendency of the Constitutional system to place political power in the hands of a moneyed aristocracy.

These arguments were raised primarily in the debate on discrimination between present and original holders of the debt. Madison broke with Hamilton in proposing a discrimination which would provide some compensation to those original holders who had become creditors in support of the war effort and had been forced by necessity to sell their severely depreciated securities. The proposal

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid. Sept. 3, 1789, 837, 856.
\textsuperscript{38}"First Report on Public Credit," Hamilton 1934, 4.
\textsuperscript{39}Annals, Feb. 15, 1790, 1221–22; Feb. 9, 1790, 1153–55. See Feb. 17, 1790, 1242.
\textsuperscript{39}Ibid. Feb. 10, 1790, 1169, 1172.
\textsuperscript{40}Ibid. Feb. 8, 1790, 1142; Feb. 10, 1790, 1173, 1175; Feb. 16, 1790, 124–29; Feb. 18, 1790, 1271. See also, Lee to Henry (Lee 1825), June 10, 1790, 100.
\textsuperscript{41}Ibid. Jan. 28, 1790, 1094, 1098, 1099–1102. "Funding the debt may or may not be a blessing . . . But this I sincerely regret. It will add strength and power to that faction that brought about the late 2d. revolution, and it will make their princely fortunes" (Burke to Samuel Bryan, March 3, 1790, Record Group 59, National Archives, cited in Bickford and Bowling 1989, 61).
would have decreased the profits of the present holders who had bought them out. His proposal was opposed on the grounds that it interfered with the rights of contract and that the transferability of securities was essential to their value and must be respected. The proposal lost by a wide margin, 36 to 13.43

The votes on assumption of the state debts were considerably closer. The major arguments centered on the effect of assumption on the relation between the states and the general government.44 Proponents of assumption argued that it would unite all creditors in support of the general government and cement the bonds of Union.45 Its opponents argued that assumption was a dangerous step toward consolidation, that antifederalist fears were being realized.46 In particular, as the antifederalists had predicted, it seemed that concurrent powers of taxation were producing a rationale for consolidating measures.47 Proponents of assumption argued that the states would not have the resources to pay the debt since the general government had effectively monopolized most sources of revenue.48 Opponents feared both that the general government would have to resort to direct taxation and that the people would lose their attachment to the state governments if they were not taxed by those governments.49

Competing state interests were involved in the question of assumption as well. Those states that had substantially paid off their creditors stood to lose by the assumption, if there were not an equitable settlement of accounts. They feared that they would essentially be bailing out the states that had discharged very little of their debt. As the debates proceeded, representatives became increasingly frank in advocating the interests of their particular states.

The debate on public credit had begun in an atmosphere of relative harmony. In early February, the question was considerably less agitated, for example, than the discussions of the “Quaker memorials” requesting Congress to inhibit the slave trade as much as possible.50 But on assumption, the House was closely divided with sharp differences of both opinion and state interest, and personal attacks and accusations of procedural maneuvering were frequent. For the first time, representatives attacked Hamilton. Bitter remarks were made to the effect that the

4"Annals, Feb. 11, 15, 19, 22, 1790.
5"The question of assumption had been raised at the Constitutional Convention and dropped, and questions were now raised as to the constitutionality of the measure (Farrand [1911] 1966, Vol. II, 355, 377; Annals, Feb. 25, 1790; 1357; Feb. 23, 1790, 1314; Feb. 24, 1790, 1328).
6""First Report on Public Credit," Hamilton 1934, 17–18; Annals, May 25, 1790 1608; March 30, 1790, 1493; April 22, 1790; 1538; Feb. 25, 1790, 1354; July 23, 1790, 1691–92.
7Ibid. March 30, 1790, 1493; April 22, 1790, 1538; Feb. 25, 1790, 1354; July 23, 1790, 1691–92.
9"Annals, Feb. 23, 1790, 1321; Feb. 24, 1790, 1333–34.
10Ibid. Feb. 23, 1790, 1312; Feb. 25, 1790, 1343–44; March 1, 1790, 1380; March 9, 1790, 1418.
11Debates on the Quaker memorials occurred on Feb. 11 and 12; March 8, 16, 17, 22, and 23, 1790.
House had become the representatives of the secretary of the treasury and not of their constituents.  

This was the prevailing atmosphere when a bill from the Senate reintroduced the question of the location of the capital. The bill set the temporary capital at Philadelphia and the permanent capital on the Potomac. Objections to Philadelphia were immediately raised, linking the funding issue with the capital question. Opponents of the temporary residence at Philadelphia suspected that, once established there, the government would never move to the Potomac. Funding had already invigorated the eastern states, and the South would languish without a southern capital. The Quaker memorials had shown that Pennsylvania was no fit place for southerners.

In contrast to the capital debate in the first session, this discussion was almost entirely a matter of charges and countercharges of political dealing and strategy. Hints were made that the fate of assumption and of the residence question were linked. As is well known, Madison, Jefferson, and Hamilton did attempt to trade northern votes on the Potomac for southern votes on assumption, even though there is some dispute as to whether this deal was consummated or, if so, effective (Bowling 1971; Cooke 1970). After assumption was defeated in the House by a narrow margin on April 12, the bill was revived and finally passed on July 24 (see appendix II and section II for roll-call votes concerning assumption, H1–H7).

The suspicion that the eventual move to the Potomac would be blocked persisted into the third session and affected the debates on the national bank (for roll call votes on the bank see appendix II and section III, votes H8–H11). Some members feared that to establish a bank at Philadelphia would secure that city as the permanent capital. Opponents of the bank bill had no antipathy to government banks as such. Rather, the issue was one of the proper use and distribution of political power between the general government and the states, regions of the country, and classes of men in the society. They argued that the bill infringed on state powers to incorporate banks and that there should be several banks serving several locations. To make matters worse, proponents of the bank relied on the doctrine of implied powers, which again was anticipated by the antifederalists. Opponents of the bill argued that that doctrine effectively destroys any limits on

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51 *Annals*, March 1, 1790, 1380; March 11, 1790, 1425; see March 15, 1790, 1449–50.
52 Ibid. July 6, 1790.
53 Ibid. July 6–9, 1790.
54 Before the bill to incorporate the bank was introduced, the House had passed a bill establishing the militia and a bill to lay excise taxes on whiskey. In both cases, arguments from the ratification campaign surfaced regarding state powers, the antirepublican character of excises, etc. On the militia, see *Annals*, Dec. 22, 1790. On excises, see especially, Jan. 5 and Jan. 21, 1791.
government and any distinction between American constitutional government and European despotism.68 Proponents of the bill replied that jealousy of governmental power would shackle the government completely.69

Opponents of the bank saw it as an unconstitutional monopoly that would concentrate wealth and influence in the capital and in the hands of “a moneyed interest at the devotion of the government.”70 The benefits would be felt by the mercantile interest and not at all by the yeoman farmer.61 In brief, the bank would exacerbate the evil effects of the funding system generally in creating that dangerous bond between political power and the interests of a particular social order that the antifederalists had warned against.

Hamilton was frank in stating his intention that the funding system attach to the government “that description of men, who are in every society the only firm supporters of government.”62 To Madison, as to the antifederalists, this system amounted to the creation of an artificial party. It exacerbated the unavoidable evils of natural parties by favoring one interest at the expense of another and by creating unnecessary opportunities for a few to accumulate wealth.63

The greatest danger from the creation of this party lay in the corruption of the legislature. Jefferson charged that the funding system passed only because legislators who stood to benefit from it financially voted on the question; that Hamilton intended to create a corrupt squadron in the legislature under his control with the purpose of establishing a monarchy.64 John Taylor of Caroline wrote:

The principle of the government is representation and responsibility—the end, the common good . . . If the will of the nation pronounces law through its political organs, the principle operates, and the end is attainable. But if a paper interest influences the majority of the legislature, the principle itself, from which alone the end is deducible, is destroyed (1794, 10).

Already it is whispered that the public debt is the support of the government—that the public will cannot be entrusted with a legislative influence . . . the last vicious principle of that English model, so slavishly copied, is thus avowed (1794, 5).

The basic elements of this republican argument are present in the Virginia Resolution on Assumption, drafted by Patrick Henry. The funding plan created a faction of “the few,” an aristocratic junta, in control of the legislature effectively excluding representation of the people from the legislative process. Hamilton’s plan for the funding of the debt was thus linked, in the minds of opponents, with a change from republican to hereditary forms of government, i.e., to aristocracy or monarchy.65
The domination of the legislature by this faction was no less a threat to union than to republicanism, because the division in the legislature fell along geographical lines. As the antifederalists had feared, southern interests were consistently sacrificed to a northern majority, and threats of secession were frequent. Thus, both of the evils of party were evident. An imbalance between parties of interest had been manipulated, and in part created, by an aristocratic faction.

Antiadministration representatives, and later Republicans, adopted an interpretation of the political events of the 1790s that corresponded to antifederalist predictions of the tendency of government under the Constitution, and they recognized the correspondence:

... the anti-federal champions are now strengthened in argument by the fulfillment of their predictions... the republican federalists who espoused the same government for its intrinsic merits, are disarmed of their weapons; that which they denied as prophecy, having now become true history... 67

By the end of the First Congress, the division in the House was itself a source of alarm for the future of the government. Important measures had been passed by bare majorities; members had engaged in political bargaining and suppressed free and fair deliberation; representatives recognized that different ideas on the great questions of government corresponded to geographical divisions. 68

The first small steps toward the creation of the Republican party after the close of the First Congress were a response to a factionalized Congress in which the issues of the ratification campaign were exacerbated rather than resolved. All of the major issues facing the First Congress had been anticipated before and during the ratification campaign, and they provoked arguments in the House along Federalist-antifederalist lines. Hamilton’s program was no exception. It tapped existing ideological and sectional divisions rather than creating new persistent blocs. There was never a point during the First Congress at which either the “regime question” or the antifederalists were put to rest.

The first requirement for a justification of party activity among men with a general antipathy to party is this understanding that nothing less than the regime itself is at stake. That the antifederalists and the Republicans saw the early measures of the new government as creating a substantial threat to the preservation of a republican union is clear. And, as we shall see, these perceptions did shape their actions.


69Annals, April 22, 1791, 1534; May 24, 1791; July 23, 1791, 1694. See also ibid., Feb. 4, 1791, 1919; Feb 5, 1791, 1930–31; Feb. 7, 1791, 1938; Madison to H. Lee, April 13, 1790, in Hunt, ed., 1904, vol. VI.
ANALYSIS OF ROLL-CALL VOTES

In the last section, we sought to demonstrate that the First Congress was dominated by recurring concerns rather than by unprecedented conflicts. In roll-call voting on these recurring issues, antifederalists played a critical role, often joined by Federalists who opposed their erstwhile allies in ratification by forming an anti-administration coalition. The impact of antifederalists in the First Congress is found in their voting behavior as well as in debate.

Continuity in views and actions should not be surprising, since there was continuity in personnel. Seven of the 14 antifederalists had been elected to the Continental Congress (although one did not serve), all but one of the remaining had served in the Revolution, and many had served as delegates to their state’s ratifying convention. Significant numbers of Federalist representatives had also had prior experience in national politics. Nine of the 14 antiadministration and 23 of the 36 pro-administration Federalists in the First Congress (as identified in Martis 1989) also were elected to the earlier Congress.69

As noted above, most of the issues debated in the First Congress had also been contentious issues in the Continental Congress in the 1780s. Several forces converged in the Continental Congress that left these important issues unresolved and seemingly unresolvable, thus preparing the way for the new Constitution. Structurally, votes were cast by individuals but counted by states. That is, each state had one vote, determined by how a majority of that state’s delegates voted on the floor. Thus if a delegation voted 2 yes and 2 no, that state would cast no vote, and a state was required to have at least two delegates vote before its vote counted. Abstention was always high, and it increased over the 1780s. The Articles of Confederation further required any important motion to receive at least nine state votes to pass. The effect of evenly divided delegations, high rates of abstention, and the necessity of nine affirmative votes was that passage required, effectively, unanimity in state votes. As a result, important problems could not be resolved under the Articles (see Jillson and Wilson, forthcoming).

In political terms, there was generally a clear majority of what Jillson and Wilson call “nationalists,” such as Hamilton and Madison, throughout the 1780s. Riker (personal communication), for example, calculates that nationalists (whom he calls “federalists”) held a majority of state delegations from 1783 to 1787 (except in 1784 when they only held a plurality). They held the required extraordinary majority, however, only in 1787, a year in which abstention was especially high and in which, of course, the Constitutional Convention was held. The result was that their majority was often insufficient for passing nationalist motions, even if united (which they rarely were).

Jillson and Wilson (forthcoming) provide a series of two dimensional representations of voting choices by members of the Continental Congress annually and on

69George Leonard (MA) was the sole member of the First Congress whose position on ratification cannot be ascertained. He was a supporter of the administration in the First Congress but did not serve in the Continental Congress.
various issues throughout the 1780s that are roughly comparable to those presented by Hoadley (1980, 1986) for the First Congress (as well as other early Congresses). In both cases, there is considerable diversity in revealed preferences (both within years and over time). Both find, for example, some degree of sectional divisions, but also some clustering around the three groups considered here; antifederalists and anti- and pro-administration Federalists. We will illustrate by comparing Jillson and Wilson’s (forthcoming) mapping of 1783 (figure 8.4), the year in which Morris’s Report on Public Credit was considered, and Hoadley’s mapping of the First Congress (1986, figure 20, 95).

In 1783, a structuring of preferences of individuals along the lines of the three regional groupings (New England, Middle States and the South) is reasonably clear, with the center of each group forming points of a triangle, but with each regional group covering a large area in the figure (among other exceptions, Madison and Williamson (NC) both antiadministration Federalists, are within the Middle States grouping). Hoadley’s results from the First Congress show that most New Englanders (located in the northwest portion of the space) are far removed from most southerners (located in the southeast). The Middle States are, however, deeply divided, with most New Yorkers in the northeast corner, and representatives from Pennsylvania and New Jersey mostly in the southwest corner (with Marylanders literally all over the map). No one is located in the center.

Both maps also illustrate some commonality within the antifederalists and the pro- and antiadministration Federalists. Two antifederalists (Bland [VA] and Gerry [MA]) served in 1783. Bland is, in Jillson-Wilson’s mapping, closer to Gerry (albeit not that close) than to Madison, let alone Hamilton. Several pro-administration Federalists, Boudinot (NJ), Fitzsimmons (PA), and Hamilton, are very close together in their mapping. Madison and Williamson, antiadministration Federalists, along with pro-administration federalist Carroll (MD) are also close to each other and in the same Middle States cluster as Hamilton, reflecting the importance of nationalism over sectionalism. Even so, they are at some distance from the Hamilton cluster and are clearly closer to the two antifederalists than to Hamilton, Boudinot, or Fitzsimmons. Hoadley places vectors summarizing the direction of voting on particular issues on his mapping of the First Congress. What he calls the “national authority” vector (including most of our constitutional issues) divides his Federalists from antifederalists, while the “domestic economic” vector (including our votes on Hamilton’s plan) is oriented about 30 degrees (by our visual estimation) from the national authority vector. That is, these two sets of issues are aligned somewhat differently, but they are strongly related to each other (Hoadley 1986, 99–100). Not only, then, do these two analyses

\*This identification refers to those who served in the Continental and the First Congress for examining the Jillson and Wilson results.

\*There were too few members of the First Congress in any one Continental Congress, however, to provide anything more than suggestive observations.

\*But so too is antiadministration Federalist William Floyd (NY).
show clear continuities, but, as we will soon see, this overview of Hoadley’s results is quite close to our own analysis.

Aldrich (forthcoming) provides another analysis of voting in the First Congress. With nearly the same three groups as here, he finds that, on average, they form points of a nearly equilateral triangle, along with the same diversity around these central tendencies all others have found. He points out that this diversity of revealed preferences made it possible to form voting majorities in different ways. While the pro-administration Federalists were a majority in the First Congress, they did not hold identical preferences, so that different proposals led to differing patterns of support and opposition. For example, votes on the location of the capital (which Hoadley finds nearly orthogonal to the two aforesaid issues) tapped regional coalitions. As a result, Aldrich points out, majority voting cycles were possible. He argues that Madison exploited that potential in temporarily defeating Hamilton’s plan for assumption of the state debt, leading to the proposed vote trade over it and the capital.

These analyses clearly show that there was considerable diversity in preferences and in voting decisions. Put alternatively, voting often seems chaotic when examined over the full range of issues considered in the First Congress. As in the earlier Congress, there are clear signs that there were regional elements in voting—but not on all, or even many, issues—and there are clear signs of the sort of philosophic differences that differentiated the first two parties. The result was the potential for the shifting bases of majority coalitions that Aldrich describes. For example, our factor analysis of votes in the First Congress yielded 20 significant dimensions by the usual criterion.73 This is a remarkably large number of factors, indicating just how unstructured, in a statistical sense, voting was in the First Congress. Similarly, we computed the Rice index of cohesion for various groups and various combinations of issues (see below for some specifics), which is a standard measure of assessing the consistency of voting among members of various groups hypothesized to be consequential (see Rae and Taylor 1970, for definition and comparison to alternative measures). In general, the cohesion scores are unusually low, suggesting lack of cohesion.

Nonetheless, amidst this general lack of structure to voting, some specific structuring to the data can be found, particularly on the measures we discussed earlier which aroused significant ideological debate. The reason we can reach this conclusion is that we are asking different questions from those posed by the statistical analyses. Put simply, if the question is whether there were legislative “parties” or regularized voting blocs covering a wide array of issues, the answer is no. If the question is, instead, whether the antifederalists played a key role on the constitutional issues and in forming the opposition to Hamilton, the answer is yes. Especially among antifederalists, their positions advanced through debate coincided with their voting choices. This was particularly true for the various constitutional

73. The usual criterion is an eigenvalue of 1 or greater. The first three factors explain 22.6, 14.9, and 12.1% the variance, respectively, a respectable amount, but less than often obtained.
issues. While that may not be surprising, it was also only somewhat less true for voting on Hamilton’s plan.

On the constitutional issues raised in the first session, for example, antifederalists and pro-administration Federalists were particularly likely to vote as opposing, cohesive blocs (Rice cohesion indices averaging 56 and 60, respectively, with anti-administration federalists being somewhat less cohesive, averaging Rice scores of 32). The series of votes on assumption, per se, were somewhat less, but still moderately, cohesive with “partisan” blocs (averaging 37, 49, and 44 for the three groups, respectively). Conversely, consider that the 12 votes on the location of the capital in the first session yielded some degree of cohesion among pro-administration Federalists (average Rice scores of 42), but not much cohesiveness among anti-administration federalists (23) and virtually none at all among antifederalists (10). Low levels of cohesion over the capital are evident as well in the third session (21 for antifederalists, 30 for antiadministration and 5 [1] for pro-administration federalists). This rather stark difference between cohesiveness in voting on constitutional issues and assumption compared to the capital is a bit surprising. Voting on the location of the capital is generally interpreted as an expression of regional interests, almost exclusively, and there is a regional makeup to the composition of these three groups. Proadministration federalists were mostly from New England (14) or the Middle States (16), with fewer from the South (7). Conversely, over half the antifederalists and antiadministration Federalists were from the South. Although the location of the capital did not simply pit North against South, there was a clear regional cast to these votes. This suggests that philosophic concerns rather than regionalism led to cohesion within each of the three “partisan” groups, regardless of region of origin.

In figure 1, we report the percent of antifederalists who voted, on key and divisive votes, for a weaker national government or executive on the constitutional

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6This is based on seven roll-call votes recorded on these issues in the first of three sessions of the First Congress.

7This is based on seven votes cast on assumption of the debt. Overall, a total of 17 votes were cast on assumption and on funding of the debt and on the bank. Cohesion scores for this set were 28, 36, and 50, respectively. Note that our analysis below is based on a somewhat smaller set of roll-call votes, specified in appendix II, that removes votes on which there was little division. We also exclude such votes below from the set of constitutional issues which are also defined in appendix II. Note, however, that our votes constitute a very large portion of Hoadley’s set of key votes on his two comparable dimensions (1986, table 6, pp. 97–98).

To put the cohesion scores in context, over the last century, such scores for the two political parties have regularly been in the 60+ range, rarely dipping below 50 (see, e.g., Brady, Cooper, and Hurley 1979).

8One of the antifederalists, Richard Bland (VA), died during the First Congress. In the empirical analysis, therefore, there are 14 antifederalists in votes related to constitutional issues and 13 in votes related to Hamilton’s Plan.

7Two antifederalists were from New England, 4 from the Middle States and 8 from the South, while the regional distribution of antiadministration federalists was 3, 9, and 17, respectively.
issues and voted against Hamilton's Plan. Obviously, the antifederalists were strongly opposed to proposals that were seen as strengthening the national government or the executive branch. Only once did opposition dip below 70% and it exceeded 80% more often than not. They were more divided on Hamilton's plan, with its overlay of sectional interests as described earlier, but only once did a majority support some aspect of his plan, and opposition often exceeded 60%.

Figure 2 contains two pieces of evidence. The first (the solid bars) indicates the proportion of the whole House who voted against a stronger government and against Hamilton's plan. Note particularly that most votes deeply divided the House. Also note that the putatively antifederalist side was often defeated, but the weaker government position carried three times and tied once (only to be defeated by the vote of the Speaker). Moreover, the first three votes on Hamilton's plan

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78 These votes are labelled C1 through C11, for the 11 constitutional votes in chronological order, and H1 through H11, for the (coincidentally) 11 votes on Hamilton's Plan, also in chronological order. These votes are identified substantively in appendix II.
Figure 2

Percent of Congress in Opposition and Percent of Congress that is Antifederalist and in Opposition

were defeats for him. The second piece of information (the lined bars) indicates the size of the antifederalist opposition as a proportion of the whole House. With all antifederalists constituting a small part of the whole House, these proportions are often small, but the interesting comparison is to the height of the solid bar. That is, it asks the question, what proportion of the opposition was due to the antifederalists? This is shown more directly in figure 3.

Even though antifederalists made up only 20% of the House and had unusually high levels of abstention, the antifederalists made up a very large part of the opposition to measures that were seen to strengthen the national government or the executive branch. This is true even though they were joined by sufficient numbers of others to be in the majority on three of the last four measures. Even

Abstention rates, in general, were higher in early Congresses than in the contemporary period. Antifederalists were even more likely to abstain than others. Most of this is due, however, to late seatings of some of the antifederalists. In any case, abstention, whether among antifederalists or all Members, was typically not strategic. Rather, it is was due primarily to absences from the seat of government.
after Bland's death reduced their numbers and even though they were on the winning side on the first three votes on Hamilton's plan, they consistently made up a quarter and sometimes more of the opposition to his measures.

This analysis of voting behavior, therefore, conforms to others in showing that voting was largely unstructured. Thus, for example, even though scholars have identified members in terms of potentially "partisan" groupings, the voting patterns of such groups were far too diverse to conclude that these constituted parties. Moreover, as figure 2 illustrates, many of the most important matters were not only sharply debated but passed or defeated by relatively small majorities. Nonetheless, antifederalists were largely united over measures related to the power of the national government or its executive branch. And, while they were noticeably more divided over the votes on Hamilton's plan, a majority of antifederalists opposed it on all but one vote, and they constituted a significant proportion of the (large) opposition to it, as well as to the more directly constitutional measures. They did so in large part because the plan was seen as a measure that raised constitutional questions. Madison and Jefferson broke with their erstwhile
ally over his fiscal policies. As we saw earlier, Madison echoed many of the antifederalist arguments in doing so and could count on substantial support from them on the floor. Antifederalists and antiadministration federalists, however, constituted a minority of the First and Second Congresses. Their defeats in opposing Hamilton’s plan led Madison and Jefferson to begin the process of organizing what would become the Jeffersonian Republican party, adopting the central antifederalist concern that the national government and its executive were becoming too powerful and threatening to undermine republican principles, not just on constitutional measures but also on policy matters, as revealed by Hamilton’s fiscal proposals (for further development of these points, see Aldrich, forthcoming). In these ways, therefore, the antifederalists and their views and actions served to link the ratification controversies with the subsequent practice of national politics.

The continuities extended not only from the Continental Congress, through the ratification debate, to the First Congress, but even beyond. Jefferson and Madison’s break with Hamilton that soon led to party formation not only incorporated antifederalist thinking into Republican ideas, but also relied, in part, on antifederalist men. Of the 13 antifederalists who could, six served in the Second Congress, and three others served in later Congresses (one, Josiah Parker [VA], as a Federalist). Four served as late as the Sixth Congress or even later, two (Timothy Bloodworth [NC] and John Peter Muhlenberg [PA]) were U.S. senators, Gerry was Madison’s vice president, and Tucker served as secretary of the treasury from 1801 until 1828 (!). That Tucker served all presidents of the “Virginia dynasty” (and Quincy Adams), and that this antifederalist was secretary of the treasury, is particularly revealing. Thus, many antifederalists continued to be active well after the narrowly constitutional measures of the First Congress were resolved and well into the period of the first party system.

CONCLUSIONS

While we agree with most analysts that there were no modern political parties in the First Congress, and that Hamilton’s program triggered the process of party formation, we disagree with those who conclude from these two observations that there was no continuity between the politics preceding and during ratification and the politics of the first party system. We argue instead that the ideology of antifederalism and the votes of antifederalist representatives played a crucial role. Indeed, without these ideas and men, it would be very difficult to explain why Hamilton’s program triggered the controversy that it did. Had the First Congress been composed entirely of federalists, the picture would have been very different. As it was, the indirect and unanticipated consequence of the ratification compromise that brought antifederalists into the House was that opposition to Hamilton was substantial, the House was nearly evenly divided, and it was clear that an organizing effort might turn the tide.

*Two others sought, but were defeated for, election to the Second Congress.
The Antifederalists, the First Congress, and the First Parties

As is often the case with history's losers, the antifederalists have been consistently underrated as a political force. Their opposition to the Constitution was based on a well-articulated, alternative understanding of republicanism that permitted their participation in national politics after their defeat in the ratification struggle and beyond their partial defeat in the fight for amendments. Moreover, a full understanding of the process of party development in America requires a recognition of the antifederalist contribution at the inception of that process. The continuity between antifederalists and Jeffersonian Republicans is not simply a matter of a correspondence between their ideas or their interests. Political actors made those ideas and interests felt in the national councils during the transitional period of the first government under the Constitution. In short, while national party organizations, like the Constitution, were new institutional forms, they did not mark points of discontinuity where politics began all over again in new ways. They should be seen instead as new forms that extended the same ideas and issues. More to the point, the origin of parties was rooted in the continuing nature of the conflict between federalist and antifederalist understandings of republican government.

The new institutional arrangements did, however, interact with the ideology and votes of the antifederalists. As noted above, the requirement of an extraordinary majority, other voting rules, and high rates of abstention meant that many of the most important issues simply could not be resolved under the Articles. Even though nationalists frequently held a majority, it was too small a majority to pass motions, even if united. Frequently, nothing at all could pass. In the First Congress, those classified as pro-administration held a majority of 37 to 28 over antifederalists and antiadministration Federalists.8 If the First Congress had employed the voting rules of the Articles, there would have been a pro-administration majority in only five states, plus support from the two states with one representative. There would have been an antiadministration majority in five states, while New York would have been evenly divided (see appendix I). Thus, issues, such as Hamilton's plan, that divided supporters and opponents of the administration would have failed, lacking the nine votes needed to pass important motions. In fact the majority of proadministration representatives was a "working majority." That is, under the new Constitution, if they voted together, their preferences would determine the outcome. Often there was considerable defection from these general sentiments. Majorities were, in fact, shifting and based on differing lines of cleavage and bases of interests. But with simple majority rule and a little coordination and organization, Hamilton and his supporters were able to pass measures which would have been defeated under the old rules. It was precisely this (fairly modest) degree of coordination and organization that Hamiltonians achieved and that, in turn, demonstrated to Jefferson and Madison that their only recourse was to seek to change the sentiment of the majority through elections. The Constitution had

8There were 36 pro-administration federalists and George Leonard (MA) who was pro-administration but unclassified as federalist or antifederalist (see appendix I and Martis 1989).
created the more energetic government its writers had sought. Without a great
deal of difference in proportionate support, Hamilton's plan passed essentially as
written, whereas Morris's plan did not. But Hamiltonians would not have had to
begin to organize without the continuing presence of antifederalist arguments and
antifederalists themselves. And Jeffersonians would not have had the ideological
“platform” and strength of numbers to turn successfully to the tentative electioneering
that eventually secured a working Republican majority in the House in the
Third Congress.

These first partisan organizations were, in this sense, quite similar to their mod-
ern counterparts. Legislative party organizations commonly seek to hold together
potentially shifting majorities, much as the Hamiltonians did, in the face of such
tactics as Madison's use of proposed amendments to the debt assumption measure
to secure sufficient defections to defeat the main measure (which Madison was
able to achieve temporarily). And, just as legislative party organizations seek to
secure what it is in their members' collective interests to achieve, so too is it
common to employ the electoral party, even if tentatively as with the Jeffersonian
Republicans, to mobilize supporters in the electorate (i.e., to overcome the collective
action problem in voting) to win elections. In this sense, while both the legis-
latively and electoral organizations of the first two parties were much less devel-
oped than they would be in later party systems, these foreshadowed further
developments and can be considered genuinely modern political parties. At the
same time, the motivations for developing the arrangements that eventually be-
came the first two parties were clearly and strongly rooted in the differing ideologi-
cal commitments that we have called here the "regime question." This should not
be surprising in general or in this specific case. Creating partisan institutions, no
matter how limited in comparison to those of, say, the second party system, was
necessarily for the purpose of seeking to secure long-term commitments. While
regional or specific interests could be a part of the rationale for seeking to affect
outcomes over the long term, ideological beliefs are inherently long-term views.
Thus, ideology should be expected to be a basis for long-term organizational devel-
opment in general. If anything, it should be expected to have been even more
important in this period. On the one hand, the Revolution, the Articles, and the
new Constitution were all centrally about the "American experiment" in republi-
can government, and those in the First Congress had long been deeply involved in
the experiment. On the other hand, the movement toward party confronted the
deeply held beliefs against party, faction, cabal, and intrigue. It is therefore to be
expected that those who did so move would do so only if there were a philosophic
as well as a practical basis for doing so.

The approach taken here is meant to demonstrate the value of an analysis that
stresses the relation between ideology and institutional development, between
American political thought and the practice of American politics. By taking such an
approach, it is possible to reach a new understanding of the vituperative partisan
rhetoric of the period, for example. If one views the party battle as a conflict of high principles, one is apt to take the rhetoric too seriously, believing that Hamilton was a monocrat or Jefferson a jacobin. If, on the other hand, one views the conflict as a struggle between interested groups, one is likely to take the rhetoric not quite seriously enough; party rhetoric is epiphenomenal, a tool of the artful politician, and more or less consciously opportunistic. Similarly, if one focuses exclusively on the development of new institutional forms, one is likely to ignore the rhetoric and to view political actors as innovators in spite of themselves, acting without understanding what they were doing.

In considering the relation between what men say and what they do, their words need not be either accepted as accurate or ignored altogether. If one recognizes that cries of “monocrat” and “jacobin” were sincere, even if exaggerated, and that they reflected serious differences in the opponents’ understandings of republicanism, one is led to confront the very interesting problems of why and to what extent these men misunderstood their situation and the ways in which that very misunderstanding motivated the development of new institutions. Had Hamilton’s opponents seen him as anything less than a “monocrat,” it is unlikely that they would have been moved to organize the opposition in the form of a national political party.

Finally, this approach reintroduces historical contingency, and with it political actors as agents of change, into our understanding of party development. If parties are divided by enduring principles, if parties are rooted in fundamental divisions of interest, or if parties arise to fulfill necessary institutional functions, their appearance on the scene is simply inevitable. But if it is understood that what is politically functional or optimal often fails to occur—if it is remembered that the Republicans succeeded organizationally where the Federalists failed, for example, then the importance of the relation of ideology and institutions becomes clear. In creating new institutions, political actors must have some coherent rationale for what they are doing. Thus, we need to know how political actors view their own situation, interpret the alternatives open to them, and justify their actions to understand why they respond to changing political and social realities as they do.

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*There have been some attempts to explain in general terms the reasons for the exaggerated responses. Louis Hartz (1955) argues that these men failed to perceive their essential similarity as Lockeian liberals because the American political spectrum, since America lacked a feudal experience, lacked the extremes of aristocrats and mobs found in Europe. Howe (1967) argues that they over-reacted to their differences because they shared a cyclical theory of empire, a sense of the critical importance of the historical moment, and the dominant republican ideology of the time according to which republics were particularly frail and therefore must be vigilantly protected from faction, the corrosive effects of prosperity on republican virtue, etc.
### APPENDIX I

#### MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: FIRST CONGRESS, 1789–1791

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Political Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>Huntington, Benjamin</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman, Roger</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sturges, Jonathan</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trumball, Jonathan</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wadsworth, Jeremiah</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>Vining, John</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Jackson, James</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baldwin, Abraham</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathews, George</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>Stone, Michael Jenifer</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seney, Joshua</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contee, Benjamin</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smith, William</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gale, George</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
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<td>Carroll, Daniel</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Ames, Fisher</td>
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<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goodhue, Benjamin</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gerry, Elbridge</td>
<td>Antifederalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sedgwick, Theodore</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partridge, George</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<td>Thacher, George</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leonard, George</td>
<td>Antifederalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Grout, Jonathan</td>
<td>Antifederalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>Foster, Abiel</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gilman, Nicholas</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Livermore, Samuel</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Boudinot, Elias</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<td>Cadwalader, Lambert</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
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<td>Schureman, James</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
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<td>Sinnickson, Thomas</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Floyd, William</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laurance, John</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benson, Egbert</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hathorn, John</td>
<td>Antifederalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silvester, Peter</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>Pro-Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Van Rensselaer, Jeremiah</td>
<td>Antifederalist</td>
<td>Antiadministration</td>
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</table>
The Antifederalists, the First Congress, and the First Parties

North Carolina
- Ashe, John Baptista: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Williamson, Hugh: Federalist, Antiadministration
- Bloodworth, Timothy: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Steele, John: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Sevier, John: Federalist, Pro-Administration

Pennsylvania
- Clymer, George: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Fitzsimons, Thomas: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Hartley, Thomas: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Hiester, Thomas: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Muhlenberg, Frederick: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Muhlenberg, John Peter G.: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Scott, Thomas: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Wynkoop, Henry: Federalist, Pro-Administration

Rhode Island
- Bourn, Benjamin: Federalist, Pro-Administration

South Carolina
- Smith, William L.: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Burke, Aedanus: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Huger, Daniel: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Sumter, Thomas: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Tucker, Thomas Tudor: Antifederalist, Antiadministration

Virginia
- White, Alexander: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Brown, John: Federalist, Antiadministration
- Moore, Andrew: Federalist, Antiadministration
- Lee, Richard Bland: Federalist, Pro-Administration
- Madison, James: Federalist, Antiadministration
- Coles, Issac: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Page, John: Federalist, Antiadministration
- Parker, Josiah: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Bland, Theodoric*: Antifederalist, Antiadministration
- Griffin, Samuel: Federalist, Pro-Administration

Source: Based on Martis (1989), Table 1H.

*As noted (note 70), Bland died in office. He was replaced by William B. Giles, listed as antiadministration, but as neither a Federalist nor antifederalist (since Martis's calculation is based on the First Federal Elections coding). While some refer to Giles as an antifederalist, we have not done so in this paper.

APPENDIX II

ROLL-CALL VOTES ANALYZED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Ayes-Nays</th>
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<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>H011003</td>
<td>Amendment to Foreign Affairs Department</td>
<td>6-22-89</td>
<td>30-18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bill concerning Executive powers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amendment</td>
<td>Vote Date</td>
<td>Vote Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment to Foreign Affairs Department Bill eliminating presidential removal power</td>
<td>6-22-89</td>
<td>31-19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish Department of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>6-24-89</td>
<td>29-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To refer Constitutional Amendments to Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>8-10-89</td>
<td>16-34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To add “expressly” to “the powers not delegated by the Constitution . . .”</td>
<td>8-21-89</td>
<td>17-32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Constitutional amendment on Congressional elections</td>
<td>8-21-89</td>
<td>23-28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Constitutional amendment limiting Congressional taxing powers</td>
<td>8-22-89</td>
<td>9-39</td>
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<tr>
<td>To amend the 8th Amendment</td>
<td>9-24-89</td>
<td>37-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judicial writs to be issued by the United States, not the president</td>
<td>9-24-89</td>
<td>25-18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Judicial writs to be issued by the United States, not the president</td>
<td>9-25-89</td>
<td>28-22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To reverse previous vote (H011031) on judicial writs</td>
<td>9-28-89</td>
<td>25-25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To discuss Treasury Report in Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>4-15-90</td>
<td>33-33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not to discuss assumption of state debts</td>
<td>4-26-90</td>
<td>32-18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pass the Public Debt Bill</td>
<td>7-19-90</td>
<td>40-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To reject assumption of state debts</td>
<td>7-24-90</td>
<td>29-32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To assume state debts</td>
<td>7-26-90</td>
<td>34-28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>On the date of commencement of interest payments on state debts</td>
<td>7-26-90</td>
<td>33-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the interest rate on state debts</td>
<td>7-29-90</td>
<td>33-27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>To discuss the Bank Bill in Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>2-1-91</td>
<td>23-34</td>
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<tr>
<td>To discuss the Bank Bill in Committee of the Whole</td>
<td>2-3-91</td>
<td>21-38</td>
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<tr>
<td>To order the question on the Bank Bill</td>
<td>2-8-91</td>
<td>38-20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>To pass the Bank Bill</td>
<td>2-8-91</td>
<td>39-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES


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