

Excerpts from “Objections of the Honorable George Mason . . . to the Constitution”

There is no declaration of rights, and the laws of the general government being paramount to the laws and constitutions of the several States, the declarations of rights, in the several States, are no security. Nor are the people secured even in the enjoyment of the benefit of the common law, which stands here upon no other foundation than its having been adopted by the respective acts forming the Constitutions of the several States.

In the House of Representatives, there is not the substance, but the shadow only, of representation; which can never produce proper information in the Legislature, or inspire confidence in the people; the laws will, therefore, be generally made by men little concerned in, and unacquainted with their effects and consequences.

The Senate have the power of altering all money-bills, and of originating appropriations of money, and the salaries of the officers of their own appointment, in conjunction with the President of the United States; although they are not the Representatives of the people, or amenable to them. These, with their other great powers (viz. their powers in the appointment of ambassadors, and all public officers, in making treaties, and in trying all impeachments) their influence . . . will destroy any balance in the government, and enable them to accomplish what usurpations they please upon the rights and liberties of the people.

The Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the judiciaries of the several States; thereby rendering laws as tedious, intricate and expensive, and justice as unattainable by a great part of the community, as in England; and enabling the rich to oppress and ruin the poor.

The President of the United States has no Constitutional Council (a thing unknown in any safe and regular government); he will therefore be unsupported by proper information and advice. . . .

Source: “Objections of the Honorable George Mason . . . to the New Constitution,” *The Freeman’s Journal; or, the North-American Intelligencer*, December 5, 1787, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00259.01