The following sketches outline the political careers of the principal Massachusetts leaders. When known, their political positions are indicated (1) on the Constitution in 1787–1788; (2) in national politics after 1789.

Adams, John (1735–1826)
Federalist/Federalist


Adams, Samuel (1722–1803)

Antifederalist/Republican


Austin, Benjamin, Jr. (1752–1820)

Antifederalist/Republican

Author of Antifederalist “Candidus” essays, 1787–88. Active Republican agitator and publicist, 1790s.

Bishop, Phanuel (1739–1812)
Antifederalist/Republican

Born Rehoboth. Militia officer, 1775–76; drafted into Continental Army, 1777, but fined for not serving. Leader of convention movement in Bristol County, 1780s; sympathized with Shaysites. Elected to state Senate, 1787, but denied seat. Member, state House of Representatives, 1787–88, 1792–95, 1797–99; state Convention, voted against ratification, 1788. Member, state Senate, 1788–91; continued vigorous opposition to Constitution in February 1788 session. U.S. Representative, 1799–1807.

Bowdoin, James (1726–1790)
Federalist/Federalist


Cushing, Thomas (1725–1788)
Federalist/

1780 until death. Acting governor, 1785. Lost gubernatorial election to James Bowdoin, 1785, but reelected lieutenant governor. Elected commissioner to Annapolis Convention, 1786.

Cushing, William (1732–1810)  
Federalist/Federalist  
Born Scituate. Graduated from Harvard College, 1751; M.A. from Yale College, 1753. Admitted to bar in 1755, and returned to Scituate to practice. Moved to Pownalborough, Maine, 1760, and became justice of the peace in Lincoln County. Justice of state Superior Court of Judicature and then of state Supreme Judicial Court, 1772–89 (chief justice, 1777–89). Member, state constitutional convention, 1779–80. Vice president of state Convention, voted to ratify, 1788. Presidential elector, 1789. Associate justice of U.S. Supreme Court, 1789 until death. (Served as acting chief justice, 1794–95. Declined appointment as chief justice in 1796 due to poor health.)

Dalton, Tristram (1738–1817)  
Federalist/Federalist  

Dana, Francis (1743–1811)  
Federalist/Federalist  
Born Charlestown but raised in Boston. Graduated from Harvard College, 1762. Admitted to bar, 1767. Elected by Cambridge to First Provincial Congress, 1774, but did not take his seat, hoping for reconciliation with Britain. In England, 1775–76, settling

Dane, Nathan (1752–1835)  
Antifederalist/Federalist  

Gerry, Elbridge (1744–1814)  
Antifederalist/Federalist; Republican  
presidential elector, 1804. Governor, 1810–12 (defeated for reelection). Vice President of U.S., 1813 until death.

Gore, Christopher (1758–1827)
Federalist/Federalist

Gorham, Nathaniel (1738–1796)
Federalist/Federalist
Born Charlestown. Apprenticed to New London, Conn., merchant, 1753–59; returned to Charlestown as a merchant. Member, colonial House of Representatives, 1771–74; first two provincial congresses, 1774–75; state Board of War, 1778–81; state constitutional convention, 1779–80; state House of Representatives, 1778–80, 1781–88 (speaker, 1781–83, 1785–86); state Senate, 1780–81, 1790–91; delegate to Congress, 1782–83, 1785–87, 1789 (president, 1786–87); and Governor’s Council, 1788–90. Delegate to Boston Convention, 1780. Delegate to Constitutional Convention, chairman of Committee of the Whole, 1787, signed Constitution. Member, state Convention, voted to ratify, 1788. With Oliver Phelps purchased 6,000,000 acres of land in western New York owned by Massachusetts, 1788; inability to make payments results in bankruptcy. Supervisor of revenue for District of Massachusetts, 1791–96.

Hancock, John (1737–1793)
Federalist/Republican
Born Braintree. Graduated from Harvard College, 1754. Wealthy Boston merchant, learned mercantile trade from his uncle Thomas Hancock in Boston and in London. His ship *Liberty* was seized by British in 1768 for smuggling, resulting in mob action and Hancock’s prosecution, which was dropped in 1769. Member, colonial House of Representatives, 1766–72, 1774, and colonial Council, 1772–74. Member, three provincial congresses, 1774–75 (president, first and second congresses); chairman, Committee of Safety of the Provincial Congress, 1774–75. Member, state Council, 1775–76. Delegate to Continental Congress, 1775–78 (president, 1775–77); signed Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation. Major general, Massachusetts militia; commanded state forces in unsuccessful expedition in Rhode Island, 1778. Member, state House of Representatives, 1777–80 (speaker in 1779–80); and state constitutional convention, 1779–80. Governor, 1780–85, 1787–93 (dies in office). Elected to Congress, 1785; elected president but never attended, and resigned as president, 1786. Member, state Convention, elected president, but did not attend until late in session when he introduced amendments and voted to ratify, 1788.

King, Rufus (1755–1827)
Federalist/Federalist


Knox, Henry (1750–1806)
Federalist/Federalist
Born Boston. Worked in bookstore and then opened his own. Enlisted in militia, 1768; second in command of Boston grenadiers, 1772. Married daughter of royal secretary, 1774. Volunteer at Bunker Hill, June 1775. Rose in Continental Army from colonel in November 1775 to major-general in March 1782. Chief of Artillery and one of Washington’s closest advisors. Commander-in-chief of Continental Army, 1783–84. Organized national Society of the Cincinnati, 1783, and served as its Secretary-General, 1783–99; Vice President, Massachusetts branch, 1783–85. Confederation Secretary at War, 1785–89; and U.S. Secretary of War, 1789–94.

Lincoln, Benjamin (1733–1810)
Federalist/Federalist


Nasson, Samuel (1745–1800)
Antifederalist/?

Otis, Samuel A. (1740–1814)
Federalist/Federalist

Parsons, Theophilus (1750–1813)
Federalist/Federalist

Sedgwick, Theodore (1746–1813)
Federalist/Federalist
Born West Hartford, Conn. Entered Yale College in 1761 but expelled before he graduated. Received degree dated 1765 in 1772. Read law in Great Barrington, admitted to bar, 1766, and began practice in Sheffield. Author of Sheffield Resolves protesting British policy, 1776. Aide-de-camp to General John Thomas on the invasion of Canada, 1776. Member, state House of Representatives, 1780, 1782–84, 1787–89 (speaker, 1788–89), and state Senate, 1784–86. Moved to Stockbridge, 1785. Delegate to Congress, 1785–86, 1788. Active in suppressing Shays’s Rebellion. Member, state Convention, voted to ratify, 1788. U.S. Representative, 1789–96, 1799–1801; and U.S. Senator, 1796–99 (replaced Caleb Strong). Associate justice, state Supreme Judicial Court, 1802 until his death.
Singletary, Amos (1721–1806)
Antifederalist/?

Strong, Caleb (1745–1819)
Federalist/Federalist

Sullivan, James (1744–1808)
Federalist/Republican

Taylor, John (c. 1734–1794)
Antifederalist/?

Thatcher, George (1754–1824)
Federalist/Federalist

Thompson, Samuel (1735–1797)
Antifederalist/

Turner, Charles (1732–1818)
Antifederalist/
Born Scituate. Graduated from Harvard College, 1752 (M.A., 1755). Minister, First Congregational Parish of Duxbury, 1755–75. Member, state House of Representatives, 1780, and state Senate, 1781–89. Member, state Convention, voted to ratify, despite

Warren, James (1726–1808)
Antifederalist/Republican


Warren, Mercy (1728–1814)
Antifederalist/Republican


Widgery, William (c. 1753–1822)
Antifederalist/Republican


Winthrop, James (1752–1821)

Antifederalist/Republican


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