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Debates in the North Carolina Convention over the Electoral College, 26 July 1788 (excerpt)

... Mr. *J. Taylor* objected to the power of Congress to determine the time of choosing the Electors, and to determine the time of electing the President, and urged that it was improper to have the election on the same day throughout the United States. That Congress, not satisfied with their power over the time, place and manner of elections of Representatives, and over the time and manner of elections of Senators, and their power of raising an army, wished likewise to controul the election of the Electors of the President. That by their army, and the election being on the same day in all the states, they might compel the electors to vote as they please.

Mr. *Spaight* answered, that the time of choosing the Electors was to be determined by Congress, for the sake of regularity and uniformity. That if the states were to determine it, one might appoint it at one day, and another at another, &c. and that the election being on the same day in all the states would prevent a combination between the Electors.

Mr. *Iredell*—Mr. Chairman, It gives me great astonishment to hear this objection, because I thought this to be a most excellent clause. Nothing is more necessary than to prevent every danger of influence. Had the time of election been different in different states, the Electors chosen in one state might have gone from state to state and conferred with the other Electors, and the election might have been thus carried on under undue influence. But by this provision, the Electors must meet in the different states on the same day, and cannot confer together. They may not even know who are the Electors in the other states. There can be therefore no kind of combination. It is probable, that the man who is the object of the choice of thirteen different states, the Electors in each voting unconnectedly with the rest, must be a person who possesses in a high degree the confidence and respect of his country.

Governor *Johnston* expressed doubts with respect to the persons by whom the Electors were to be appointed. Some, he said, were of opinion that the people at large were to choose them, and others thought the state Legislatures were to appoint them.

Mr. *Iredell* was of opinion, that it could not be done with propriety by the state Legislatures, because as they were to direct the manner of appointing, a law would look very awkward, which should say “They gave the power of such appointments to themselves.”

Mr. *Maclaine* thought the state Legislatures might direct the Electors to be chosen in what manner they thought proper, and they might direct it to be done by the people at large.

Mr. *Davie* was of opinion, that it was left to the wisdom of the Legislatures to direct their election in whatever manner they thought proper.

Mr. *Taylor* still thought the power improper with respect to the time of choosing the Electors. This power appeared to him to belong properly to the state Legislatures, nor could he see any purpose it could answer but that of an augmentation of the Congressional powers, which he said were too great already. That by this power they might prolong the elections to seven years, and that though this would be in direct opposition to another part of the Constitution, sophistry would enable them to reconcile them.

Mr. *Spaight* replied, that he was surprised that the gentleman [Joseph Taylor] objected to the power of Congress to determine the time of choosing the Electors, and not to that of fixing the day of the election of the President. That the power in the one case could not possibly answer the purpose of uniformity without having it in the other. That the power in both cases could be exercised properly only by one general superintending power. That if Congress had not this power, there would be no uniformity at all, and that a great deal of time would be taken up in order to agree upon the time. . . .

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