

George Mason's Objections to the Constitution of Government formed by the Convention, Fall 1787

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; and will generally be directed by minions and favorites-or he will become a tool to the Senate-or a Council of State will grow out of the principal officers of the great departments; the worst and most dangerous of all ingredients for such a Council in a free country; for they may be induced to join in any dangerous or oppressive measures; to shelter themselves, and prevent an enquiry into their own misconduct in office: Whereas, had a Constitutional Council been formed (as was proposed) of six Members, viz. two from the eastern, two from the middle, and two from the southern States; to be appointed by vote of the States in the House of Representatives, with the same duration and rotation of office as the Senate, the Executive would always have had safe and proper information and advice. The President of such a Council might have acted as Vice-President of the United States, *pro tempore*, upon any vacancy or disability of the Chief Magistrate; and long-continued Sessions of the Senate would, in a great measure have been prevented. From this fatal defect of a Constitutional Council, has arisen the improper power of the Senate, in the appointment of public officers, and the alarming dependence and connexion between that branch of the Legislature and the Supreme Executive. Hence also sprung that unnecessary and dangerous officer, the Vice-President; who, for want of other employment, is made President of the Senate; thereby dangerously blending the Executive and Legislative powers; besides always giving to some of the States an unnecessary and unjust pre-eminence over the others.

Cite as: *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009. Original source: Ratification by the States, Volume VIII: Virginia, No. 1