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## Amendment to Share Expenses According to Population 18 April 1783

The debate over the basis for sharing common expenses among the states, which began during the writing of the Articles of Confederation in 1776 and 1777, resumed in March 1783. The “special committee,” appointed on 21 February 1783 to report on an independent income for Congress, recommended on 6 March that the Articles of Confederation be amended. It proposed that common expenses be shared according to the number of all inhabitants, excluding Indians not paying taxes, instead of the value of land granted to or surveyed for individuals. The amendment went through the following stages:

(1) On 18 March the special committee reported that expenses should be shared according to all white and other free inhabitants, those bound to servitude for a period of years [indentured servants] and “three-fifths of all other persons” [slaves] except for Indians not paying taxes.

(2) On 20 March the three-fifths clause was dropped.

(3) A committee reported on 28 March that expenses should be shared according to the whole number of free inhabitants and one-half of all others except for Indians not paying taxes.

(4) In the debate on 28 March various proposals were made as to the number of slaves to be counted. Madison finally moved, “in order to give a proof of the sincerity of his professions of liberality,” that three-fifths of the slaves should be counted. John Rutledge seconded the motion, and James Wilson said that he “would sacrifice his opinion to this compromise.” Congress approved the amendment five states to three. Theodorick Bland and Arthur Lee of Virginia then moved that the amended clause be struck out, and Congress agreed six states to five.

(5) On 1 April Alexander Hamilton moved to reconsider the three-fifths clause and Congress then voted, eight states to one (Rhode Island) with Massachusetts divided, to reinsert the clause in the amendment. Madison explained the final vote as follows: “Those who voted differently from their former votes were influenced by the conviction of the necessity of the change and despair on both sides of a more favorable rate of the slaves.”

That as a more convenient and certain rule of ascertaining the proportions to be supplied by the states respectively to the common treasury, the following alteration in the articles of confederation and perpetual union, between these states, be, and the same is hereby agreed to in

Congress; and the several states are advised to authorise their respective delegates to subscribe and ratify the same as part of the said instrument of union, in the words following, to wit.

So much of the 8th of the articles of confederation and perpetual union between the thirteen states of America, as is contained in the words following, to wit.

“All charges of war, and all other expences that shall be incurred for the common defence or general welfare, and allowed by the United States in Congress assembled, shall be defrayed out of a common treasury, which shall be supplied by the several states in proportion to the value of all land within each state granted to or surveyed for any person, as such land and the buildings and improvements thereon, shall be estimated according to such mode as the United States in Congress assembled shall from time to time direct and appoint,” is hereby revoked and made void; and in place thereof it is declared and concluded, the same having been agreed to in a Congress of the United States, that all charges of war and all other expences that have been or shall be incurred for the common defence or general welfare, and allowed by the United States in Congress assembled, except so far as shall be otherwise provided for, shall be defrayed out of a common treasury, which shall be supplied by the several states in proportion to the whole number of white and other free citizens and inhabitants, of every age, sex and condition, including those bound to servitude for a term of years, and three fifths of all other persons not comprehended in the foregoing description, except Indians, not paying taxes, in each state; which number shall be triennially taken and transmitted to the United States in Congress assembled, in such mode as they shall direct and appoint.

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