

# Foundations: Background To American History

Chapter 4



# The American Revolution and The Declaration of Independence

- ◆ So what led up to it? Domino effect?
  - ◆ French and Indian War (Britain left with a higher debt)
  - ◆ Taxation without Representation! (Stamp Act, Tea Act)
  - ◆ Boston Tea Party
  - ◆ Boston Massacre

Do you feel that all of these were a violation of their rights as “freeborn” Englishmen?

# The American Revolution

- ◆ **Second Continental Congress** voted **George Washington** as general of the continental army



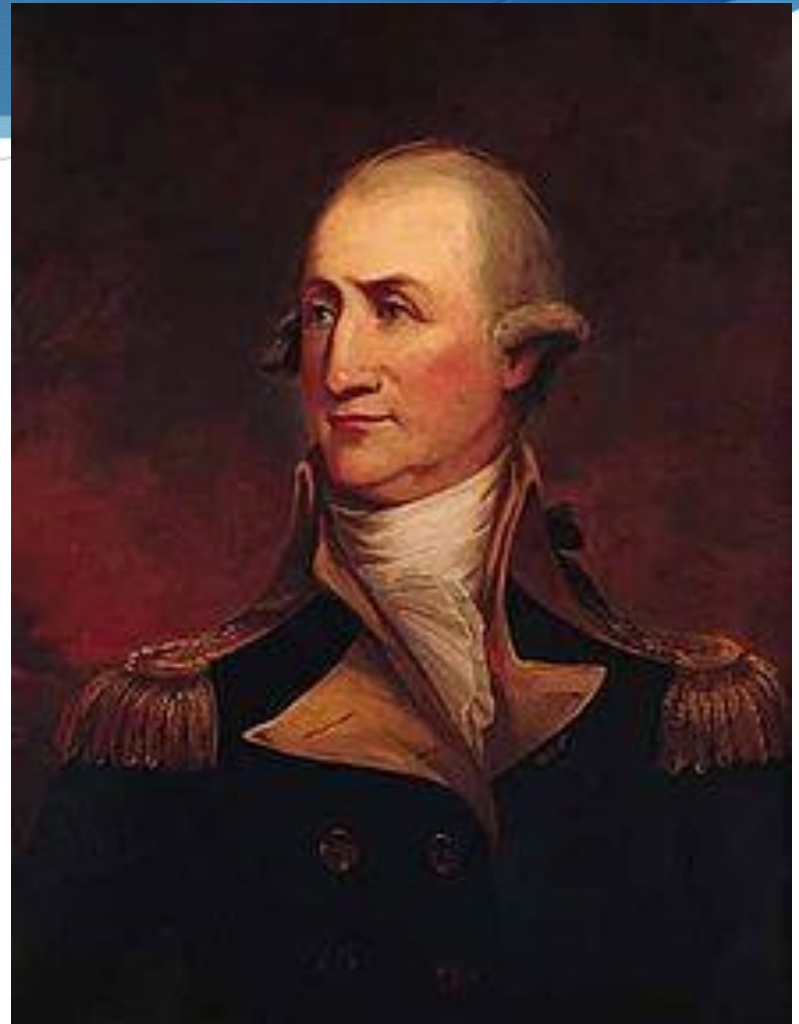
# Jonathan Trumbull Sr.

- ◆ Governor of Connecticut, only one to side with the colonists, supplied the army with food clothing and munitions.



# John Peter Muhlenberg

- ◆ A protestant minister recruited for the Revolutionary army, through the **Black Regiment**.





# Declaration of Independence

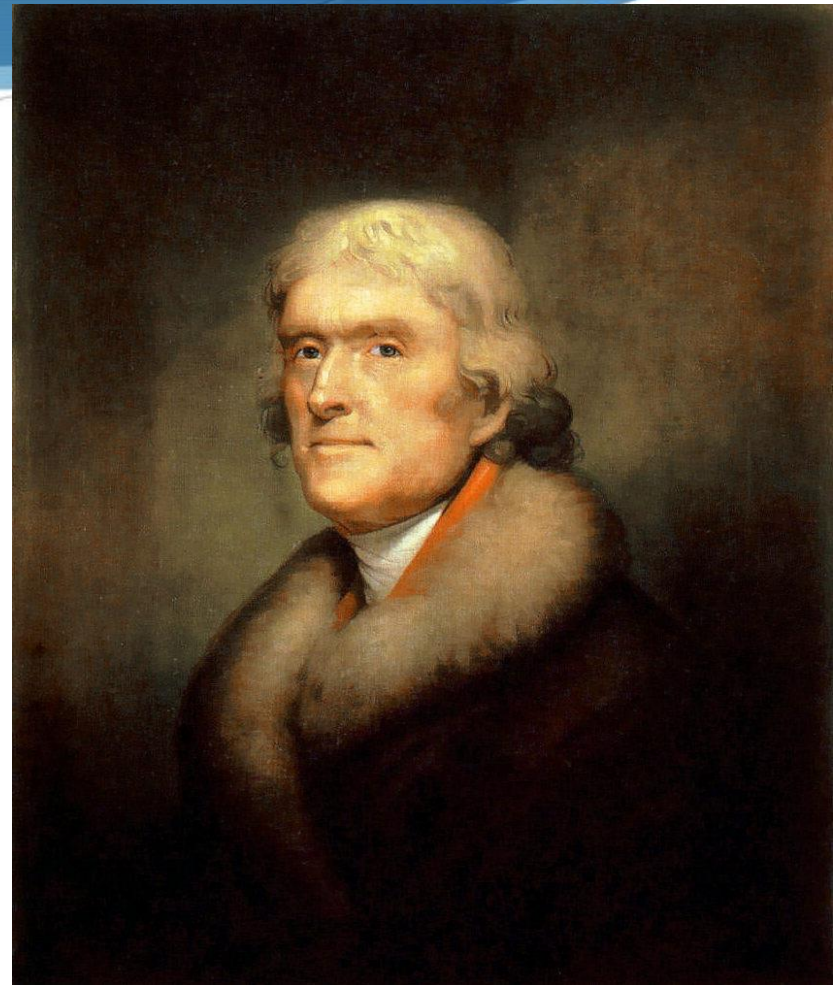
- ◆ A “Committee of Five” was charged with writing the draft, representatives of the **Second Continental Congress** began discussing the issue early on. They decided on one man to take the task...

# Declaration of Independence

Issued on July 4 1776 explained why they wanted Independence

Ideas borrowed from **John Locke**, such as unalienable rights

**Thomas Jefferson** was given the duty to write the original draft



# Declaration of Independence

absolute alter assume become cause colony constrain despotism  
destructive dictate disposed earth entitle equal event form foundation  
government guard happiness history  
impel king liberty life long man mankind nature necessity new  
object organizing patient person power present prove provide respect  
right same submitted sufferance system truth unalienable usurpation  
whenever



# The Declaration of Independence & In/Unalienable Rights

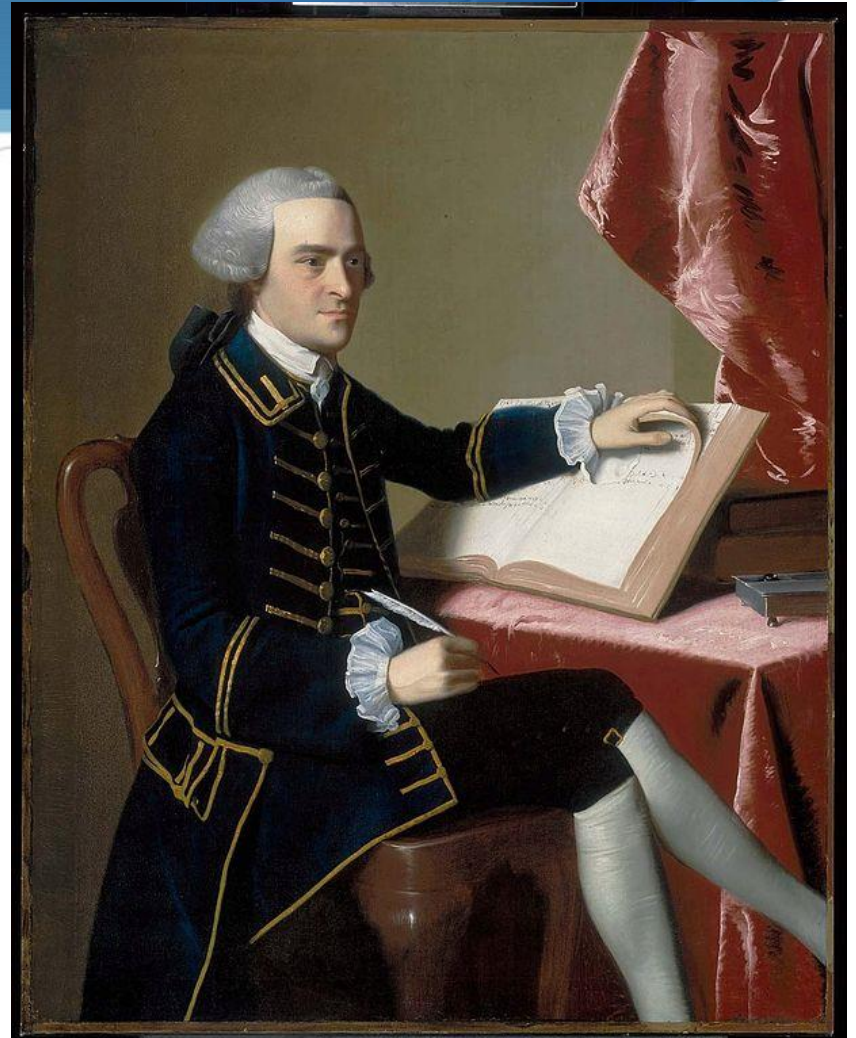
- ◆ So what **unalienable rights**?
  - ◆ Rights that could not be taken away “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”.
  - ◆ Right to overthrow an oppressive government that failed to protect these rights.
  - ◆ Lists of grievances against King George III.

# Signers of the Declaration

- ◆ It had to be signed from North to South and it was nothing to be taken lightly, signing it was seen as an act of treason, punishable by death!
- ◆ So who was crazy enough to sign it??

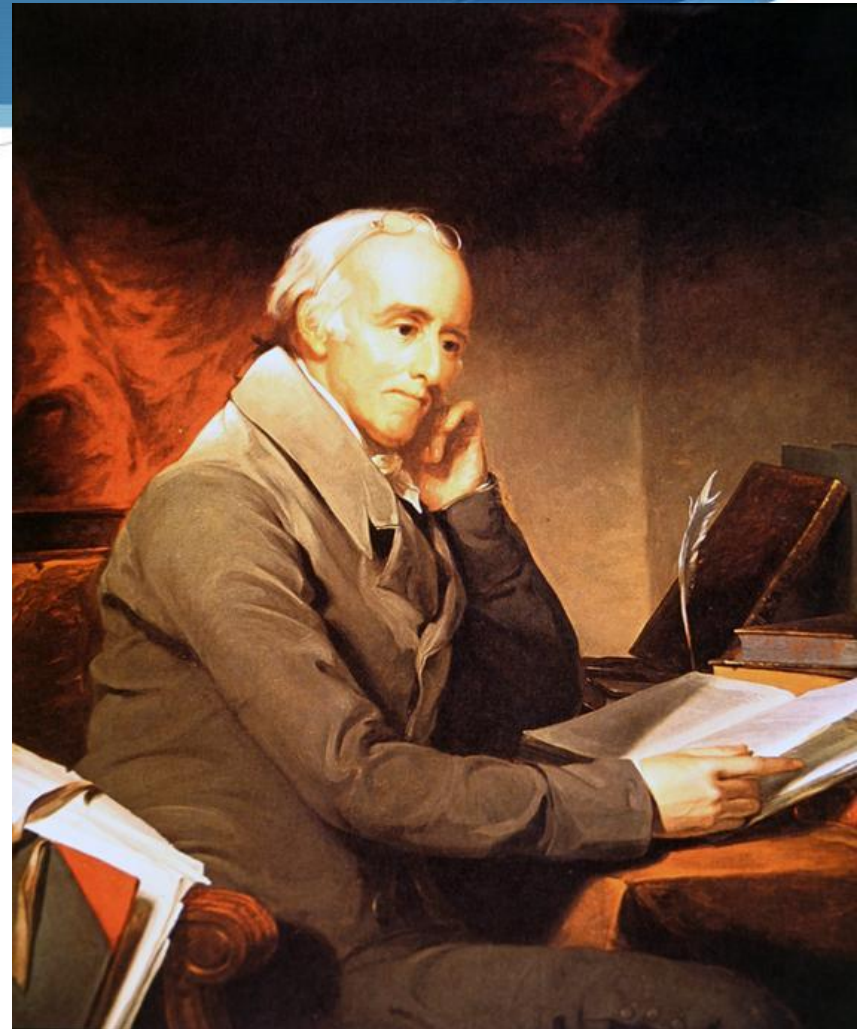
# John Hancock

- ◆ First to sign it
- ◆ Merchant from Boston and **President of the Continental Congress**
- ◆ Famous name and a symbol of freedom



# Benjamin Rush

- ◆ A physician, educator, and humanitarian, known as the **“Father of American Medicine”**
- ◆ Proposed a national public university to train public servants, favored education for women, and established the oldest African-American





# Charles Carroll of Carrollton

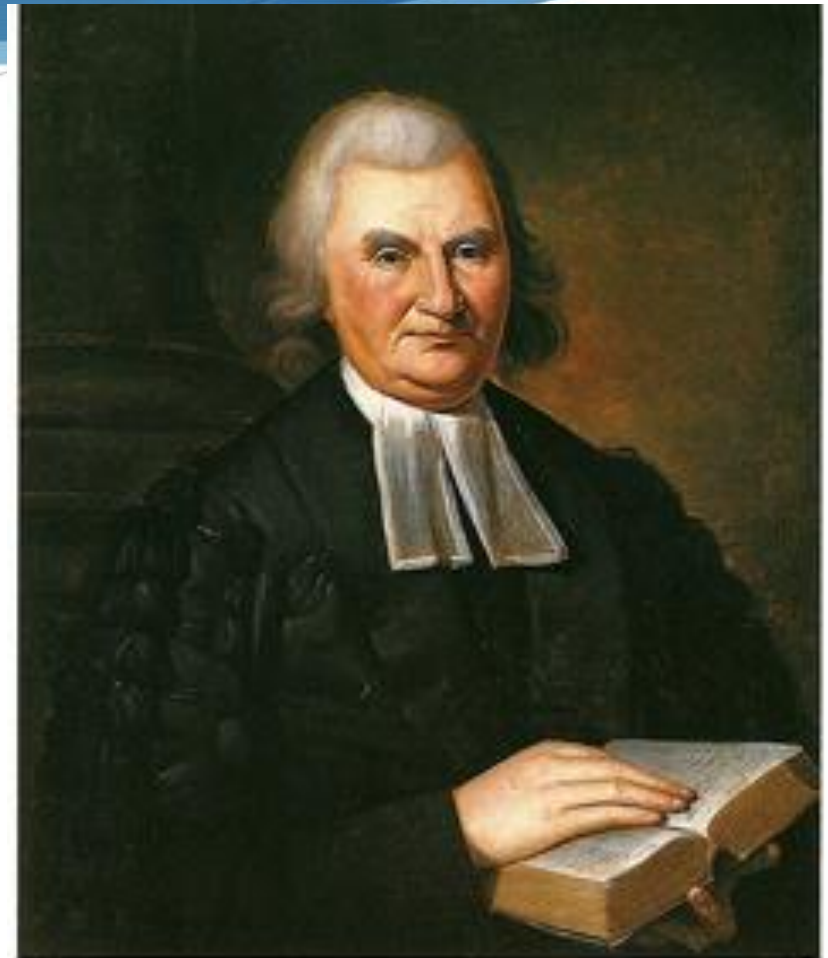
- ◆ One of the wealthiest men in the colonies
- ◆ **Financed the revolution** with his own money
- ◆ One of the first to recognize the need for independence and strongly argued for armed resistance.
- ◆ A Catholic that helped the struggle for acceptance of Catholics.





# John Witherspoon

- ◆ A Scottish immigrant and a **leading member of the Continental Congress**
- ◆ When speaking about the United States being ready for independence he said **“was not only ripe for independence, but in danger of rotting for the want of it”**
- ◆ President of the College of New Jersey (Princeton)



# The U.S. Constitution

- ◆ Turning the aspirations of the **Declaration of Independence** into a concrete system.
- ◆ **Articles of Confederation**, first government written but it set up a very weak government.
- ◆ **Constitutional Convention** meeting in Philadelphia in 1787 abandoned it and wrote a new one.

# Principles of the U.S. Constitution

- ◆ **Written** by the **Constitutional Convention**, establish basic structure to our national government.
- ◆ Power for the people to elect their own representatives.
- ◆ Create a government strong enough to defend the nations interests and promote its general welfare.
- ◆ Important powers and federal law supreme over state law.

**So what did it create?**

# President

- ◆ An elected **President**



# Congress

- ◆ A **Congress** with two houses



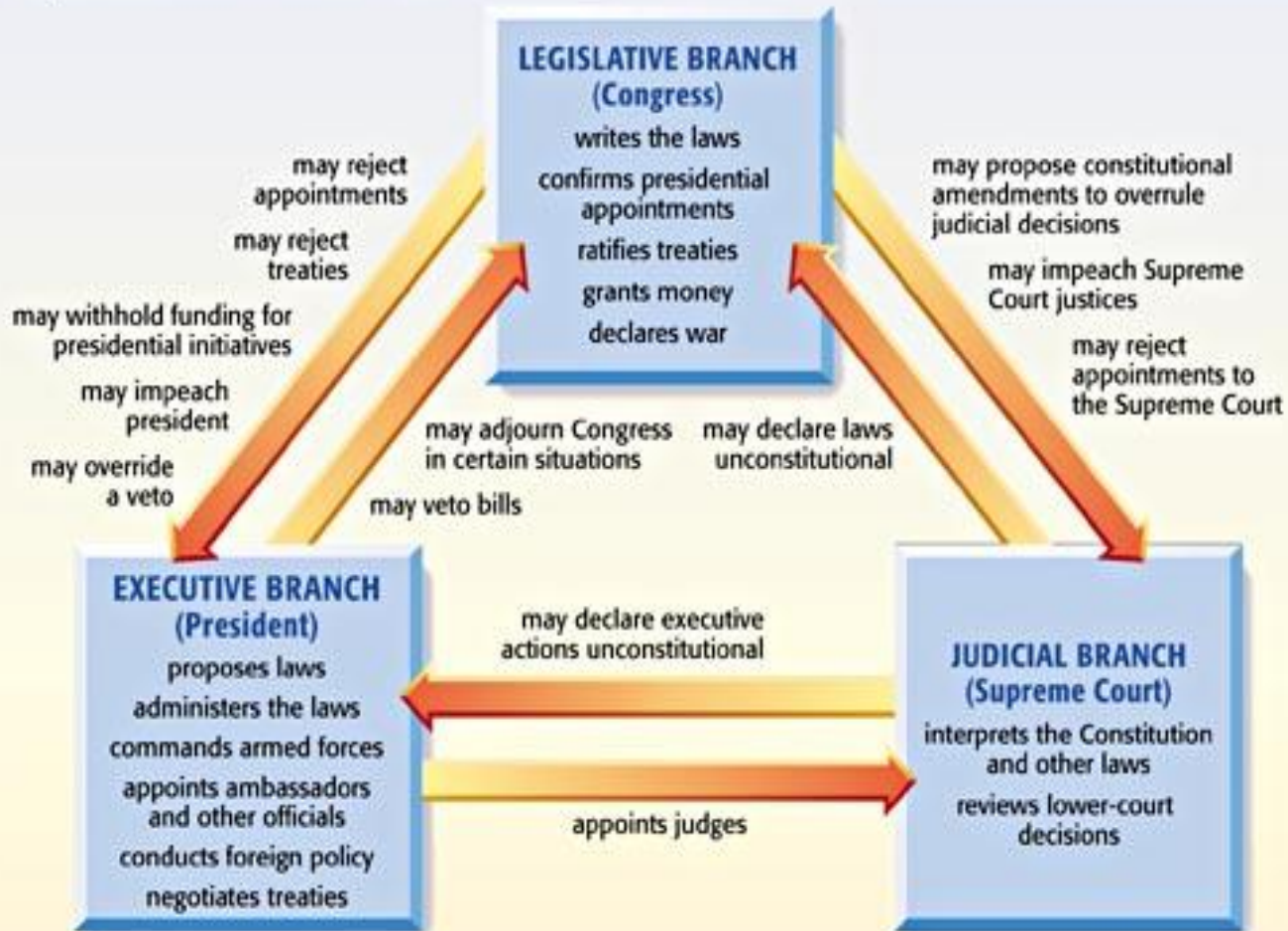


# Supreme Court

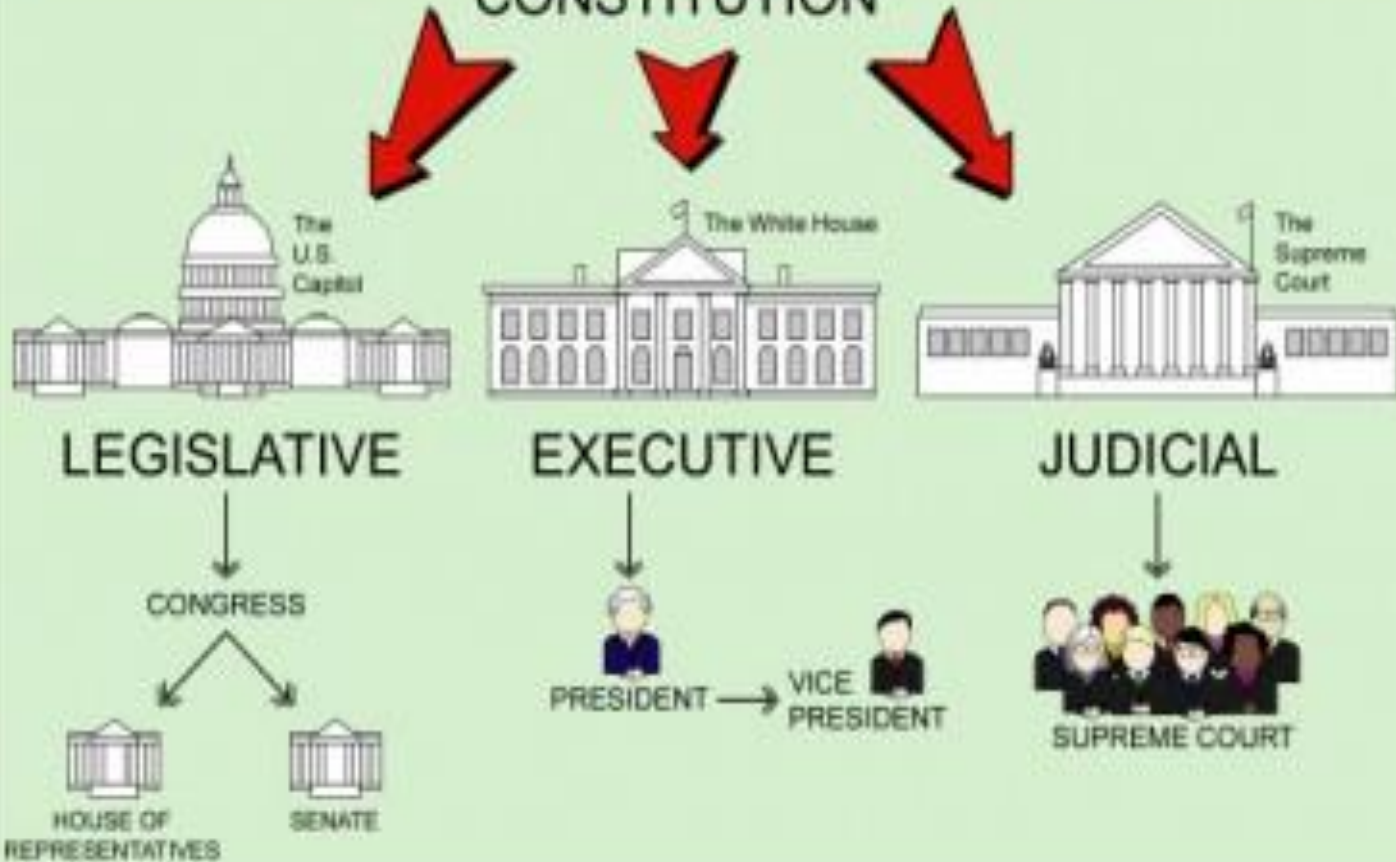
## ◆ A Supreme Court



## Separation of Power and Checks and Balances



# CONSTITUTION



# Keeping it in Check

- ◆ They did not want the government too strong so what should they do??

# Important Principles of the U.S. Constitution

- ◆ **Limited government** government only has power within the constitution
- ◆ **Republicanism** representatives elected by the people
- ◆ **Popular Sovereignty** powers of the Government come from consent of the governed
- ◆ **Federalism** powers of government divided between the national government and the states.



# Important Principles of the U.S. Constitution

- ◆ **Checks and Balances** prevent one branch from becoming too powerful
- ◆ **Separation of powers** divide the power of the federal government between **Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court**
- ◆ **Amendments** allowed to make important changes so it can adjust to changing times and attitudes

# John Jay

- ◆ A member of the **Continental Congress** who favored independence.
- ◆ Negotiated the peace treaty after the revolutionary war.
- ◆ Author of the **Federalist Papers**, three papers that argued strongly in support of ratification
- ◆ 1789 appointed by George Washington to be the **first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court**



# The Bill of Rights

- ◆ The **Constitution** only contained a few specifics on individual rights. It was ratified with the promise of the **Bill of Rights**
- ◆ A list of rights to protect individual liberties

# First Amendment

- ◆ Protects freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and the right of citizens to petition their government





# Second Amendment

- ◆ Protects the right of the citizens to bear arms (not those bear arms)





# Third Amendment

- Says government cannot “quarter” soldiers in private homes without their consent

BRENT EXERCISES HIS 3RD AMENDMENT RIGHTS...

NO! YOU CAN'T CRASH ON MY COUCH AND GET THAT TANK OUT OF MY YARD!



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# Fourth Amendment

- ◆ Protects people from “unreasonable searches”



# Fifth Amendment

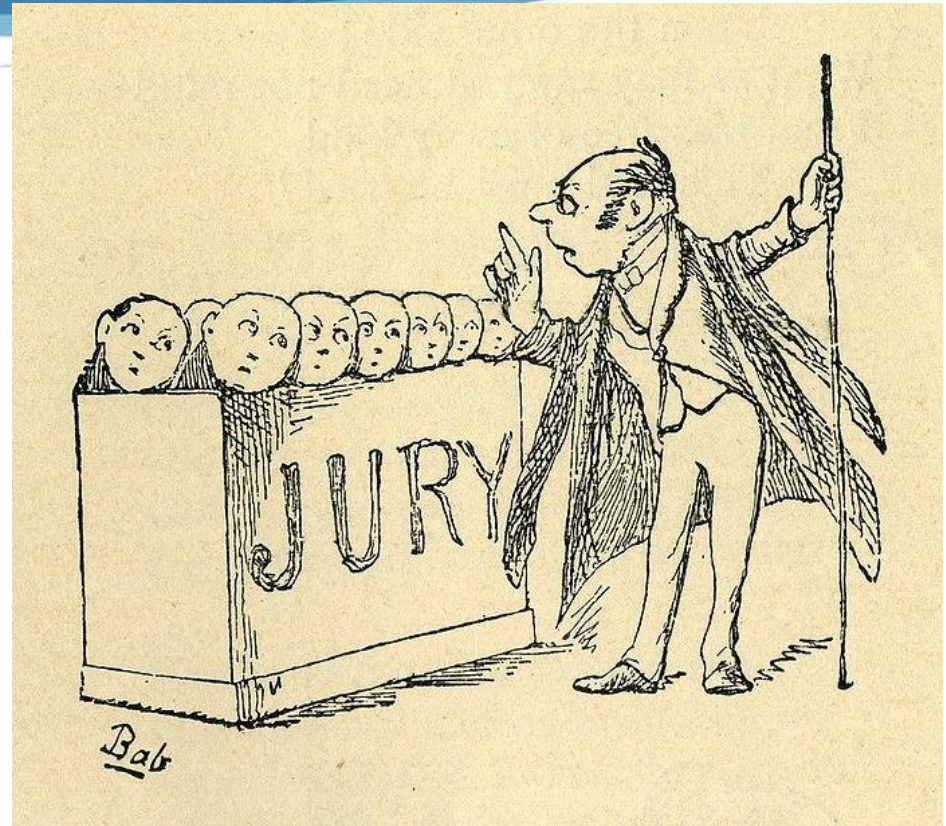
- ◆ Protects individuals from double jeopardy, and from being forced to incriminate themselves, and further guarantees citizens “just compensation” for property taken by government’s right to eminent domain.



**FIF**  
I plead it.

# Sixth Amendment

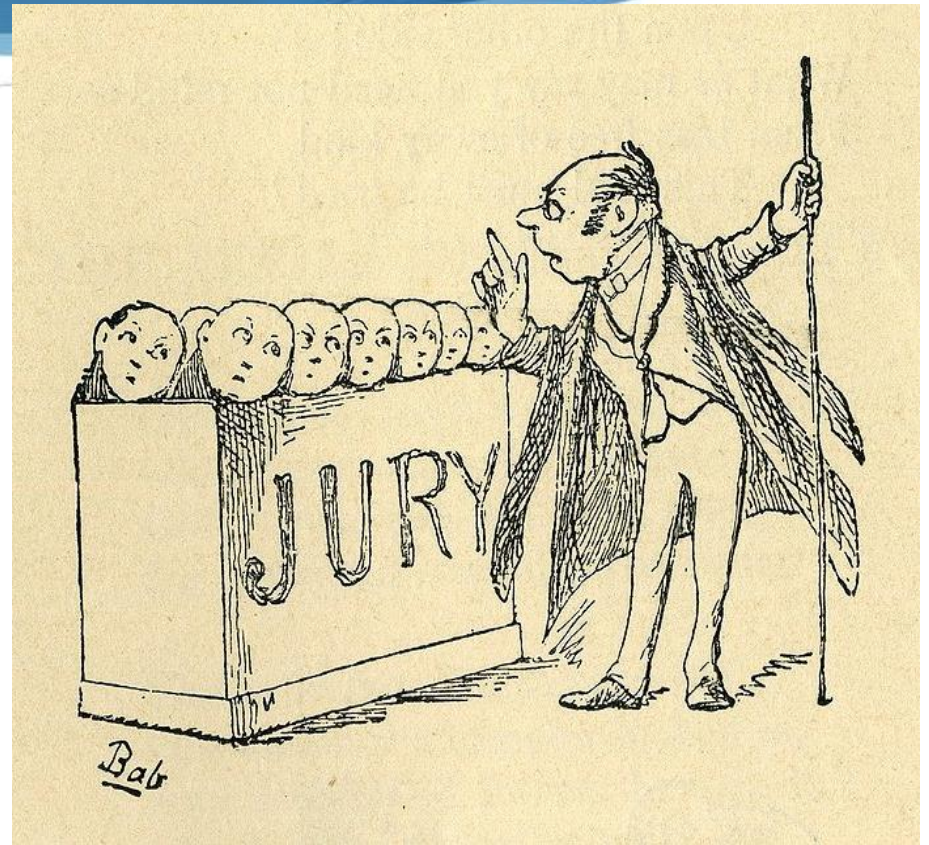
- ◆ Guarantees jury those accused of a crime. Also a fair and public trial by a jury and the assistance of a lawyer





# Seventh Amendment

- ◆ Guarantees the right to a trial by jury in many civil cases





# Eighth Amendment

- ◆ Prevents judges from setting bail that is too high, or from inflicting “cruel and unusual” punishments



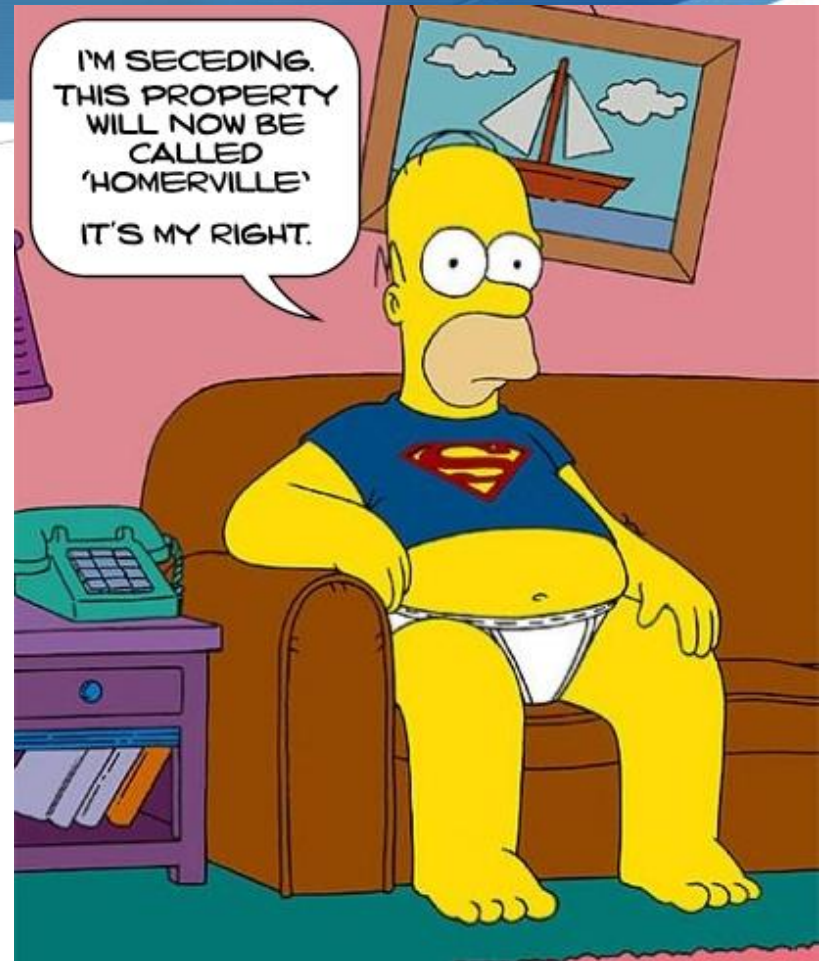
# Ninth Amendment

- Just because the Constitution lists some specific rights, this does not mean that citizens do not also hold other rights



# Tenth Amendment

- ◆ Federal government has only those powers specifically given to it in the Constitution. All other powers are reserved to the states or the people



# What are Americans?

◆ **Hector St. John de Crevecoeur** said

*“He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds....Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world” 1782*

# What are Americans?

- ◆ **Alexis de Tocqueville** in his book *Democracy in America*
- ◆ “Many important observations suggest themselves upon the social condition of the Anglo-Americans; but there is one that takes precedence of all the rest. The social condition of the Americans is democratic; this was its character at the foundation of the colonies, and it is strongly marked...” 1835



# What are Americans and What Should Come Next?

- ◆ Which means in America the common people exercised political power.
- ◆ But he also said the ones right for the job are not necessarily in power.
- ◆ What can one do to fix that?

# Five Values of Tocqueville

- ◆ **Egalitarianism (Equality)** to safeguard liberty, everyone has the right to own land
- ◆ **Populism (Popular Sovereignty)** referring that all citizens should participate in their politics because they have the right to do so
- ◆ **Liberty** protection from a tyrannical government

# Five Values of Tocqueville

- ◆ **Individualism** people in America were free to flourish without hereditary distinctions, this led one to believe they could rise in society.
- ◆ **Laissez-Faire** government should not become too protective and that each individual was the best judge of his own interests. A “hands-off” approach