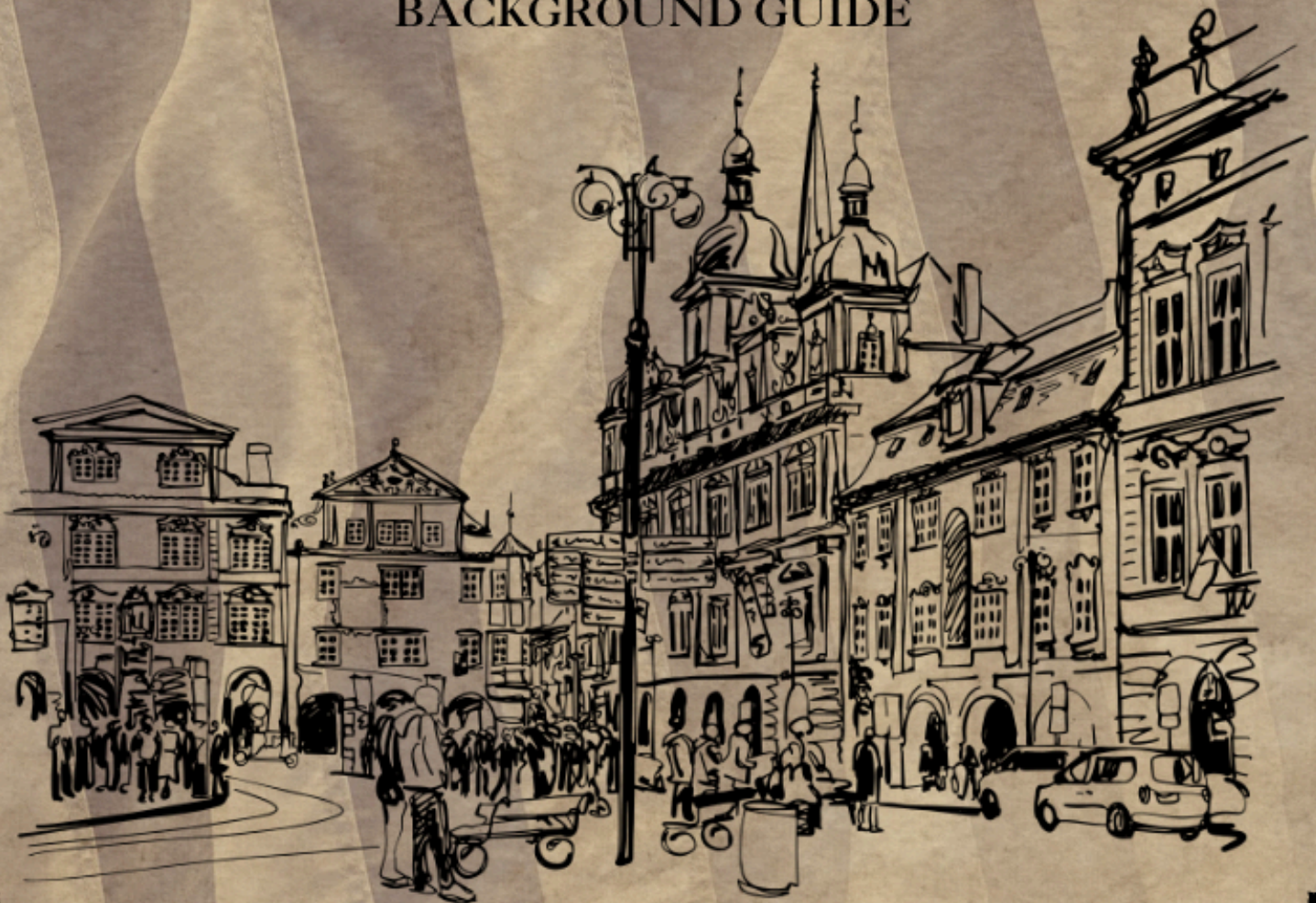


CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

- 1787 -

August 29th, 2026
'ToMUN
BACKGROUND GUIDE



Chair Introductions



Hello delegates!

My name is Noelle Watase and this is my senior year at 'Iolani and my third year in MUN. It will be my first time chairing, and I'm so grateful for this opportunity. I hope to make this an exciting and insightful experience for all of us, and I look forward to hearing everyone's ideas. Besides MUN, I also participate in Mock Trial and outside of school I enjoy eating good food, exploring new places, and painting! I can't wait to see you all at 'IoMUN 2026!

Noelle Watase - 2027

nmw2701@iolani.org



Dear Delegates,

My name is Alessia Park, and I am a junior here at 'Iolani. This will be my second year participating in MUN, but I also have a background in speech and debate as well as public speaking. I am so excited to be co-chairing the Constitutional Convention Committee for 'IoMUN 2026! Outside of MUN, you'll see me spending time with my friends and going on outings such as the beach. A lot of thought and hard work was put into preparing this committee, and we hope you will enjoy the experience as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. I look forward to seeing the creativity, collaboration, and debate that each of you will bring!

Alessia Park - 2028

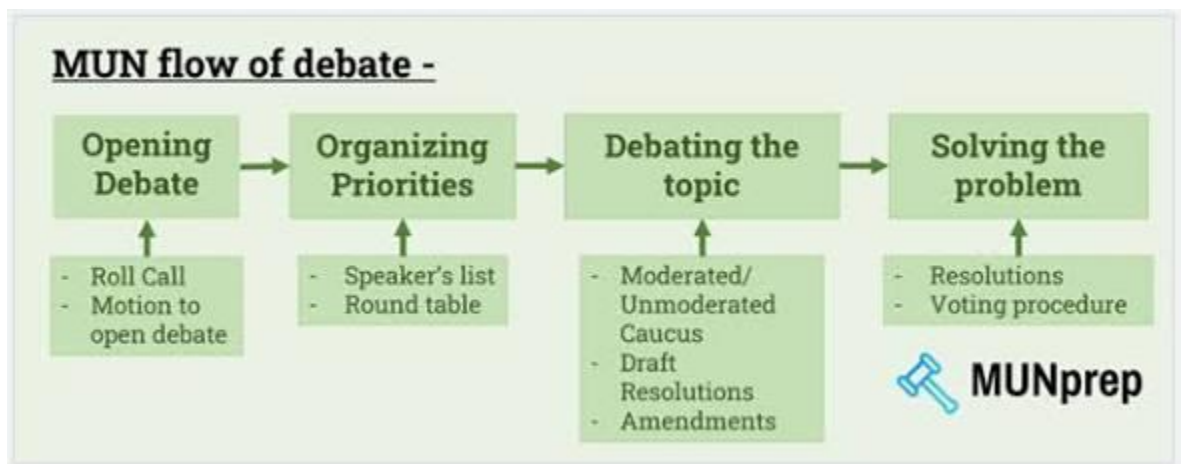
ap2801@iolani.org

Feel free to email the chairs at any time with questions or concerns :)

Committee Layout Explanation

The Constitutional Convention Beginner committee will proceed as follows:

- Each delegate is assigned the role of a Founding Father in attendance at the Constitutional Convention of 1787
- Each delegate must represent the stance, policies, and/or beliefs tied to the Founding Father
 - Research including primary sources (journals, interviews, etc.), excerpts, or secondary accounts regarding your assigned Founding Father is encouraged before entering committee
 - A large part of Model UN is staying “on policy” - staying close to your role’s stance, regardless of your personal views on the topic
 - This means forming appropriate blocs and in-committee actions that adhere to your role’s view
- The timeline of events are as follows. Chairs can explain the meaning of each event if requested at the beginning of the committee!



(MUNprep)

- **“Resolutions” = writing a new constitution!**
 - Delegates will be collaborating with each other to write the constitution, as with the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Technology Policy

- Technology **is allowed** for this conference but you should already have all your stuff prepared.
- While the use of technology is permitted, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is **not allowed** at all times. We expect delegates not to use AI on all committee business, including Position Papers, Resolutions, etc. If AI usage is found, the delegate at the chair's discretion may not be eligible for any awards.

Position Paper Policy

- For submission, please email a PDF version to the chair (nmw2701@iolani.org) and CC the Co-Chair (ap2801@iolani.org) by **August 25th at 11:59pm** to be eligible for Best Research. Otherwise, for other awards, please submit by **August 28th at 11:59pm**. Anyone who does not submit on time will sadly not be considered for any awards.
 - Your PDF should be titled:
FirstNameLastName_CommitteeType_DelegatePosition)
 - EX: JaneDoe_Beginner_AlexanderHamilton
- The position paper should be **one page** and in **12 point Times New Roman** font with **1.5 spacing**. The one page does not include the works cited. Both MLA and APA format is accepted. Position papers should be written in the **first person**.
 - On the top left corner of your paper, make sure to include the Committee, School, and Delegate Position.
 - EX:
 - Committee: Constitutional Convention
 - School: 'Iolani School
 - Delegate: Alexander Hamilton

Committee Procedure

- Delegates are permitted to pass notes to one another throughout the conference. Notes should remain relevant to committee proceedings and must be passed through the appropriate staff or dais procedures.

- Delegates are permitted to wear costumes that are appropriate to the committee and conference setting. Costumes should remain respectful and must not interfere with committee proceedings or the ability of delegates to participate.

IoMUNC Schedule - Saturday, August 29, 2026

8-8:20am	Check in @Arillaga Student Center
8:25-8:55am	Opening Ceremony
9:00-10:45am	Committee Session I
10:45-11:00am	Break
11:00am-12:15pm	Committee Session II
12:15-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00-2:00pm	Committee Session III
2:10-2:30pm	Closing Ceremony

MUN Draft Resolution format

[Committee Name]

[Topic/Area of Discussion]

Sponsors: [List of countries/delegates who wrote the resolution]

Signatories: [List of countries/delegates supporting the resolution]

Preambulatory Clauses:

- Usually start with present participle verbs (e.g., Recognizing, Taking into consideration, Emphasizing, etc.)
- Provide background information, precedents, and reasons justifying the resolution
- Each clause should end with a comma (,) and the following clauses begin with words like Recognizing, Bearing in mind, Noting, etc.

Operative Clauses:

- Start with actionable verbs (e.g., Calls upon, Urges, Recommends, etc.)
- Propose specific actions to address the issue at hand
- Each clause should end with a semicolon (;) except for the last clause, which ends with a period (.)

Introduction to Topic

Welcome, Founding Fathers, to the Constitutional Convention of 1787! As delegates gathered in Philadelphia, the future of the young United States rested in their hands. After winning independence from Great Britain, the nation faced growing political and economic instability under the Articles of Confederation. The existing government lacked the authority to effectively tax, regulate trade, or maintain national unity, leaving many Americans concerned about the survival of the republic.

In response, delegates from across the state assembled to debate one central question: how could the nation create a stronger government without threatening the liberties they had just fought to secure? Throughout the Convention, delegates clashed over representation, federal power, slavery, executive authority, and the balance between large and small states. Their debates, compromises, and competing visions would ultimately shape the Constitution and define the future of American democracy.

As members of this committee, delegates must defend the interests of their states while also considering the future of the nation as a whole. Whether you leave Philadelphia as fierce rivals, reluctant compromisers, or celebrated visionaries, history is waiting to see what kind of government you create. The windows are shut, the debates are heated, and the fate of the republic now rests in your hands.

Historical Background

Before the United States became independent, the thirteen colonies were governed by Great Britain. During the mid-1700s, tensions increased as Britain imposed new taxes and laws on the colonies without giving them representation in Parliament. Events such as the Stamp Act, the Boston Tea Party, and the Intolerable Acts fueled colonial anger and calls for greater self-government.

In 1775, conflict between Britain and the colonies officially began with the American Revolution. One year later, the colonies adapted the Declaration of Independence, primarily written by Thomas Jefferson, declaring their separation from British rule. After years of war, the colonies secured independence in 1783 through the Treaty of Paris.

Following independence, the new nation operated under the Articles of Confederation, America's first national government. The Articles created a very weak central government because many Americans feared concentrated power after their experience under British rule. Congress could not effectively tax citizens, regulate trade, or enforce laws, which led to economic instability and disagreements amongst states.

These weaknesses became especially clear during Shays' Rebellion, when farmers in Massachusetts protested debt and taxation. The national government struggled to respond, convincing many leaders that a stronger system of government was necessary.

In 1787, delegates from twelve states met in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention to revise the Articles of Confederation. However, the delegates soon decided to create an entirely new framework of government. Major debates centered around representation, federal power, slavery, taxation, and the balance between large and small states.

Several important compromises shaped the final Constitution. The Great Compromise established a bicameral Congress with equal representation in the Senate and population-based representation in the House of Representatives. The Three-Fifths Compromise addressed how enslaved individuals would be counted for representation and taxation.

After months of debate, the Constitution was completed and signed in September 1787. Supporters of the Constitution, known as Federalists, argued that a stronger national government was necessary for stability and unity. Opponents, known as Anti-Federalists, feared that the government would become too powerful and threaten individual liberties. To address these concerns, the Bill of Rights was added in 1791.

The Constitution established the foundation of the modern American government, including separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, and the protection of individual rights. Today, it remains one of the most influential political documents in world history.

Founding Fathers Position List

New Hampshire

John Langdon

- **Federalist.** Favored a stronger national government and commercial stability. Generally supported the Constitution and ratification. Merchant and politician who supported a stronger national government and later served in important leadership positions in the new republic.

Nicholas Gilman

- **Federalist.** Supported the Constitution and stronger national authority, particularly compared with the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.

Massachusetts

Elbridge Gerry

- **Anti-Federalist / skeptical of the Constitution.** Worried about excessive federal power and the lack of a Bill of Rights. Did not sign the Constitution. (Important if delegates are debating individual liberties!)

Nathaniel Gorham

- **Federalist.** Experienced politician who supported strengthening the national government and was willing to compromise on representation. Also lead a lot of the debate.

Rufus King

- **Strong Federalist.** Favored national authority, commerce, and a stable federal government. Also opposed efforts that would weaken the Union.

Caleb Strong

- **Federalist.** Lawyer and political leader who supported constitutional ratification and later served as governor of Massachusetts. He was also attentive to state interests.

Connecticut

William Samuel Johnson

- **Federalist.** Legal scholar who supported balancing state and federal authority and later became president of Columbia College.

Roger Sherman

- **Moderate Federalist.** Strong defender of state equality. He helped create the Great Compromise between large and small states and played a key role in drafting important documents.

Oliver Ellsworth

- **Federalist.** Supported a stronger judiciary system and later became the third Chief Justice of the United States.

New York

Alexander Hamilton

- **Strong Federalist.** Wanted a powerful national government, strong executive, national financial system, and national economic development. Advocated for a strong federal government and later established many of the nation's financial systems.

John Lansing Jr.

- **Anti-Federalist.** Strong defender of state sovereignty. Delegate who opposed the Constitution because he believed it gave too much power to the national government.

Robert Yates

- **Anti-Federalist.** Believed the proposed government was dangerously powerful and could threaten state governments and individual liberties.

New Jersey

William Livingston

- **Federalist.** Governor of New Jersey who supported constitutional reform and national unity.

David Brearley

- **Federalist.** Chairman of the New Jersey delegation who defended the interests of smaller states but ultimately supported the constitutional compromise.

William Paterson

- **Initially Anti-Federalist/strong states' rights position, later Federalist.** Author of the New Jersey Plan, which proposed equal representation for states in Congress. Ultimately signed the Constitution.

Jonathan Dayton

- **Federalist.** Supported a stronger national government but strongly defended the rights and equal representation of smaller states, helping push for the Great Compromise.

Pennsylvania

Benjamin Franklin

- **Federalist.** Respected diplomat, inventor, and statesman who encouraged compromise and unity during the Convention.

Thomas Mifflin

- **Federalist.** Former military officer and political leader who supported the creation of a more effective national government.

Robert Morris

- **Federalist.** Financial leader who helped organize funding for the American Revolution and supported economic stability.

George Clymer

- **Federalist.** Merchant and patriot who supported independence and later promoted national development.

Thomas Fitzsimons

- **Federalist.** Businessman and legislator who contributed to discussions on trade and finance.

Jared Ingersoll

- **Federalist.** Lawyer who supported constitutional ratification and later became a major legal figure.

Gouverneur Morris

- **Federalist.** Played a major role in drafting the Constitution's final wording, including parts of the Preamble.

James Wilson

- **Federalist.** Legal scholar who strongly supported popular sovereignty and later served on the Supreme Court.

Delaware

George Read

- **Federalist.** Supported a stronger national government and later served in both judicial and political roles.

Gunning Bedford Jr.

- **Federalist.** Advocated for the rights of smaller states during debates over representation but in the end supported the Constitution.

John Dickinson

- **Moderate.** Known as the "Penman of the Revolution," he did not join the Federalist Party but promoted compromise and constitutional balance. Wanted a stronger Union but insisted that smaller states retain meaningful political equality.

Richard Bassett

- **Federalist.** Supported constitutional ratification and later served as governor and senator.

Jacob Broom

- **Federalist.** Businessman and local leader who contributed to debates on commerce and governance.

Maryland

James McHenry

- **Federalist.** Supported a stronger national government and later became Secretary of War.

Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer

- **Federalist.** Experienced statesman who supported compromise and federal cooperation.

Daniel Carroll

- **Federalist.** Prominent supporter of ratification and one of the few Catholic delegates at the Convention.

Luther Martin

- **Anti-Federalist.** Strong defender of states' rights who opposed portions of the Constitution.
 - Refused to sign the constitution because of concerns about federal power

John Francis Mercer

- **Anti-Federalist.** Delegate skeptical of centralized authority and concerned about protecting local governments.

Virginia

George Washington

- **Strong Nationalist.** Wanted a government capable of maintaining national unity, defense, and economic stability. Generally supported a stronger central government. Presided over the Constitutional Convention and later became the first president of the United States.

Edmund Randolph

- **Moderate.** Introduced the Virginia Plan, which became the foundation for much of the Constitution. He wanted a stronger national government, but ultimately refused to sign the Constitution because he had concerns about the final document.

John Blair

- **Federalist.** Judge and statesman who later became an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

John Blair Jr.

- **Federalist.** Supported a stronger national government and ultimately backed the Constitution, siding with Washington and Madison on most major issues and also supported ratification in Virginia

James Madison

- **Federalist.** Known as the “Father of the Constitution” for his extensive role in drafting and promoting the document.

George Mason

- **Anti-Federalist.** Advocated for individual liberties and influenced the later creation of the Bill of Rights.

George Wythe

- **Federalist.** Legal scholar and teacher who mentored many future American leaders.

James McClurg

- **Federalist.** Physician and delegate who participated in debates regarding executive power.

North Carolina

William Blount

- **Federalist.** Political leader who supported western expansion and constitutional reform.

Richard Dobbs Spaight

- **Federalist.** Young delegate who supported ratification and later became governor of North Carolina.

Hugh Williamson

- **Federalist.** Scholar and physician who contributed to debates on representation and national policy.

William Richardson Davie

- **Federalist.** Military officer and political leader who supported a stronger union.
 - Participated briefly in Convention but did not sign (due to health concerns)

Alexander Martin

- **Moderate.** Generally supported constitutional reform and the stronger federal structure, although he was also attentive to state interests.

South Carolina

John Rutledge

- **Federalist.** Influential legal leader who supported a strong central government and chaired major committees. He also strongly defended South Carolina's interests, including slavery and the state's economic interests.

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

- **Federalist.** Military officer and diplomat who strongly supported national unity. Favored a stronger national government while protecting southern interests.

Charles Pinckney

- **Federalist.** Young delegate who contributed ideas regarding the structure of government. Also defended southern/state interests, particularly regarding slavery and representation.

Pierce Butler

- **Federalist.** Heavy advocate for southern interests and participated actively in debates over representation.

Georgia

William Few

- **Federalist.** Supported constitutional ratification and later served in the Senate.

Abraham Baldwin

- **Federalist.** Helped mediate compromises between large and small states and later founded the University of Georgia.

William Houstoun

- **Federalist.** Delegate who contributed to discussions on state and federal cooperation.

George Walton

- **Federalist.** Signer of the Declaration of Independence who later served as governor and senator.

John Mercer

- **Anti-Federalist.** Opposed the Constitution because he believed it created too much centralized federal power. Did not sign.

Important Additional Founding Figures Often Referenced But Did NOT Attend Constitutional Congress:

Thomas Jefferson

- Primary author of the Declaration of Independence and supporter of republican ideals, though he was serving abroad during the Convention.

John Adams

- Leading advocate for independence and diplomat who helped secure international support for the Revolution.

Samuel Adams

- Important revolutionary organizer who encouraged colonial resistance against British rule.

Patrick Henry

- Influential speaker who defended states' rights and individual freedoms.

Thomas Paine

- Author of *Common Sense*, which inspired support for independence among colonists.

Abigail Adams

- Political advisor and writer who encouraged greater consideration of women's rights and civic responsibility.

Mercy Otis Warren

- Writer and historian who supported the Revolution through political commentary and advocacy.

Discussion

In order to fully immerse themselves in the Constitutional Convention, delegates must consider the many competing interests and perspectives that shaped the creation of the Constitution. While most delegates agreed that the Articles of Confederation were too weak to effectively govern the nation, they differed greatly on how much power should be given to the federal government. Delegates must consider the tension between creating a stronger and more unified nation while protecting the authority of individual states and the liberties of American citizens.

Additionally, delegates should consider how the interests of their individual states influence their positions on major issues. Differences in population, economic interests, geographic location, and reliance on slavery created significant divisions between the states. Questions surrounding representation, taxation, trade, executive power, and slavery required delegates to balance their own interests with the broader future of the nation.

Ultimately, the Constitutional Convention was not simply a debate over how to replace the Articles of Confederation. It was a struggle over what the new United States should look like and how power should be distributed within it. Delegates must be prepared to defend their beliefs, form alliances, negotiate with opposing viewpoints, and determine which issues they are willing to compromise on in order to create a government capable of preserving both national stability and individual liberty.

Questions to Consider

As you prepare your position paper, consider the following questions:

- What does your delegate believe are the greatest weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, and how should they be addressed?
- How strong should the national government be? What powers should it have, and what powers should remain with the states?
- What are your founding father's primary political beliefs and priorities? How do these beliefs shape your vision for the new American government?
- What are your founding father's state's primary interests and concerns? How might the proposed Constitution affect your state politically, economically, and socially?
- What issues are most important or non-negotiable? What compromises might your position be willing to make in order to reach an agreement?
- What would make your delegate support or oppose the final Constitution?

Works Cited

"Constitutional Convention and Ratification, 1787–1789." *Office of the Historian, Shared Knowledge Services, Bureau of Administration*,
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Foner, Eric, et al. *Give Me Liberty! An American History*. 7th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.

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