

In 1789, when the people demanded that the government protect their individual rights, the Constitution was changed for the first time. The first ten amendments are collectively known as the Bill of Rights.

Creating The BILL OF RIGHTS

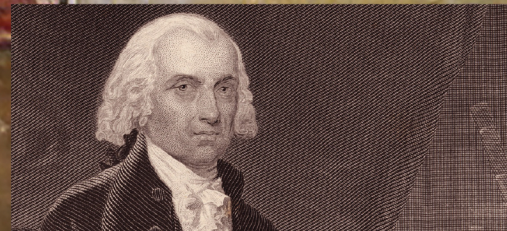
The Founders decided a bill of rights was unnecessary and chose not to include one in the Constitution. This was a mistake, as opponents of the Constitution used this to argue against ratifying our governing document. Several states reluctantly ratified the Constitution but expressed the desire that a bill of rights would be considered by the First Congress. In total, the states suggested over 200 changes to the Constitution.

“EXTENDING THE GROUNDS OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT . . .”

- CHANGE TO THE PREAMBLE TO THE BILL OF RIGHTS, AUGUST 25, 1789

The First Congress acknowledged that they needed to propose a set of amendments to give the people what they desired. After much debate, Congress sent 12 amendments to the states for approval. Ten were ratified by the states and became known as our Bill of Rights on December 15, 1791.

DID YOU KNOW THAT
ORIGINALLY THERE WAS
NO BILL OF RIGHTS
IN THE CONSTITUTION?



WHO WROTE THE BILL OF RIGHTS?

Representative James Madison presented 19 proposals to the First Congress in 1789. His inspiration came from other documents that protected individual rights, particularly state constitutions and English documents —like Magna Carta. He also included many of the changes sent in by the states during ratification.

SOME THINGS TO KNOW:

RATIFICATION - The process through which the states approve documents or amendments proposed by Congress

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