

THE CONSTITUTION

“STATES ARE RISING”

“Federalist Papers”, thoughts on the 2nd Amendment in the Bill of Rights:

“What country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance. **Let them take arms.**” – **Thomas Jefferson**, letter to James Madison, December 20, 1787

“I enclose you a list of the killed, wounded, and captives of the enemy from the commencement of hostilities at Lexington in April, 1775, until November, 1777, since which there has been no event of any consequence ... I think that upon the whole it has been about one half the number lost by them, in some instances more, but in others less. **This difference is ascribed to our superiority in taking aim when we fire; every soldier in our army having been intimate with his gun from his infancy.**” – **Thomas Jefferson**, letter to Giovanni Fabbroni, June 8, 1778

“**To disarm the people...[i]s the most effectual way to enslave them.**” – **George Mason**, referencing advice given to the British Parliament by Pennsylvania governor **Sir William Keith**, The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, June 14, 1788

I ask who are the militia? They consist now of **the whole people**, except a few public officers.” – **George Mason**, Address to the Virginia Ratifying Convention, June 4, 1788

“**Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed**, as they are in almost every country in Europe. The supreme power in America cannot enforce unjust laws by the sword; because the whole body of the people are armed, and constitute a force superior to any band of regular troops.” – **Noah Webster**, An Examination of the Leading Principles of the Federal Constitution, October 10, 1787

“Besides the advantage of being armed, which the Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation, the existence of subordinate governments, to which the people are attached, and by which the militia officers are appointed, **forms a barrier against the enterprises of ambition, more insurmountable than any which a simple government of any form can admit of.**” – **James Madison**, Federalist No. 46, January 29, 1788

“**...the ultimate authority**, wherever the derivative may be found, **resides in the people alone...**” – **James Madison**, Federalist No. 46, January 29, 1788

“**A militia when properly formed are in fact the people themselves...and include, according to the past and general usage of the states, all men capable of bearing arms...** **To preserve liberty, it is essential that the whole body of the people always possess arms**, and be taught alike, especially when young, how to use them.” – **Richard Henry Lee**, Federal Farmer No. 18, January 25, 1788

“**The Constitution shall never be construed to prevent** the people of the United States who are peaceable **citizens from keeping their own arms.**” – **Samuel Adams**, Massachusetts Ratifying Convention, 1788

“For it is a truth, which the experience of ages has attested, that **the people are always most in danger when** the means of injuring their rights are in the possession of those of whom they entertain the least suspicion.” – **Alexander Hamilton**, Federalist No. 25, December 21, 1787

“If the representatives of the people betray their constituents, there is then no resource left but in the exertion of that original right of **self-defense** which is paramount to all positive forms of government, and which against the usurpations of the national rulers, may be exerted with infinitely better prospect of success than against those of the rulers of an individual state. In a single state, if the persons intrusted with supreme power become usurpers, the different parcels, subdivisions, or districts of which it consists, having no distinct government in each, can take no regular measures for defense. The citizens must rush tumultuously to arms, without concert, without system, without resource; except in their courage and despair.” – **Alexander Hamilton**, Federalist No. 28

“[I]f circumstances should at any time oblige the government to form an army of any magnitude that army can never be formidable to the liberties of the people **while there is a large body of citizens**, little, if at all, inferior to them in discipline and the use of arms, **who stand ready to defend their own rights and those of their fellow-citizens.** This appears to me the only substitute that can be devised for a standing army, and the best possible security against it, if it should exist.” – **Alexander Hamilton**, Federalist No. 28, January 10, 1788¹

¹[The Founding Fathers Explain The Second Amendment \(thefederalistpapers.org\)](http://TheFoundingFathersExplainTheSecondAmendment(thefederalistpapers.org))