
THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1789-2005

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

The Constitution (Art. I, sec. 4) provided that "The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year * * * on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different day." Pursuant to a resolution of the Continental Congress the first session of the First Congress convened March 4, 1789. Up to and including May 20, 1820, eighteen acts were passed providing for the meeting of Congress on other days in the year. Since that year Congress met regularly on the first Monday in December until January 1934. The date for convening of Congress was changed by the Twentieth Amendment to the Constitution in 1933 to the 3d day of January unless a different day shall be appointed by law. The first and second sessions of the First Congress were held in New York City; subsequently, including the first session of the Sixth Congress, Philadelphia was the meeting place; since then Congress has convened in Washington, D.C.

FIRST CONGRESS

MARCH 4, 1789, TO MARCH 3, 1791

FIRST SESSION—*March 4, 1789,¹ to September 29, 1789*

SECOND SESSION—*January 4, 1790, to August 12, 1790*

THIRD SESSION—*December 6, 1790, to March 3, 1791*

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES—JOHN ADAMS, of Massachusetts

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE—JOHN LANGDON,² of New Hampshire

SECRETARY OF THE SENATE—SAMUEL A. OTIS,³ of Massachusetts

DOORKEEPER OF THE SENATE—JAMES MATHERS,⁴ of New York

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—FREDERICK A. C. MUHLENBERG,⁵ of Pennsylvania

CLERK OF THE HOUSE—JOHN BECKLEY,⁶ of Virginia

SERGEANT AT ARMS OF THE HOUSE—JOSEPH WHEATON,⁷ of Rhode Island

DOORKEEPER OF THE HOUSE—GIFFORD DALLEY

CONNECTICUT

SENATORS

Oliver Ellsworth
William S. Johnson

REPRESENTATIVES AT LARGE

Benjamin Huntington
Roger Sherman
Jonathan Sturges
Jonathan Trumbull
Jeremiah Wadsworth

DELAWARE

SENATORS

Richard Bassett
George Read

REPRESENTATIVE AT LARGE

John Vining

GEORGIA

SENATORS

William Few
James Gunn

REPRESENTATIVES

Abraham Baldwin

James Jackson
George Mathews

MARYLAND

SENATORS

John Henry
Charles Carroll, of *Carrollton*

REPRESENTATIVES

Daniel Carroll
Benjamin Contee
George Gale
Joshua Seney
William Smith
Michael Jenifer Stone

MASSACHUSETTS

SENATORS

Tristram Dalton
Caleb Strong

REPRESENTATIVES

Fisher Ames
Elbridge Gerry
Benjamin Goodhue

Jonathan Grout
George Leonard
George Partridge⁸
Theodore Sedgwick
George Thacher

NEW HAMPSHIRE

SENATORS

John Langdon
Paine Wingate

REPRESENTATIVES AT LARGE

Abiel Foster
Nicholas Gilman
Samuel Livermore

NEW JERSEY

SENATORS

Jonathan Elmer
William Paterson⁹
Philemon Dickinson¹⁰

¹Neither a quorum of the Senate nor of the House of Representatives appeared in their respective chambers on Wednesday, March 4, 1789. Eight Senators appeared and the minority adjourned from day to day until Monday, April 6, when a quorum of the Senate was first present. Thirteen Members of the House of Representatives appeared on March 4, and a quorum was not present until April 1, when the body proceeded to the transaction of business. When both Houses were organized on April 6, they met in joint convention in the hall of the Senate and proceeded to open and count the electoral votes for President and Vice President. John Adams, the Vice Presi-

dent-elect, appeared in the Senate Chamber and assumed the duties of the chair on Tuesday, April 21, 1789. On May 15, 1789, the Senate determined by lot the classes into which the membership should be divided agreeably to paragraph 2, section 3, of Article I of the Constitution, as follows: Class 1, term expires March 3, 1791 - Messrs. Carroll, Dalton, Ellsworth, Elmer, Maclay, Read, and Grayson. Class 2, term expires March 3, 1793 - Messrs. Bassett, Butler, Few, Lee, Strong, Paterson, and Wingate. Class 3, term expires March 3, 1795 - Messrs. Gunn, Henry, Johnson, Izard, Langdon, and Morris.

²Elected April 6, 1789.

³Elected April 8, 1789.

⁴Elected April 7, 1789.

⁵Elected April 1, 1789.

⁶Elected April 1, 1789.

⁷Elected May 12, 1789.

⁸Resigned August 14, 1790.

⁹Resigned November 13, 1790, having been elected governor.

¹⁰Elected to fill vacancy caused by resignation of William Paterson, and took his seat December 6, 1790.

NEW JERSEY—ContinuedREPRESENTATIVES AT LARGE¹¹

Elias Boudinot
Lambert Cadwalader
Thomas Sinnickson
James Schureman

NEW YORK

SENATORS

Rufus King¹²
Philip John Schuyler¹³

REPRESENTATIVES

Egbert Benson
William Floyd
John Hathorn¹⁴
John Laurance
Peter Silvester¹⁵
Jeremiah Van Rensselaer¹⁶

NORTH CAROLINA

SENATORS

Benjamin Hawkins¹⁷
Samuel Johnston¹⁸

REPRESENTATIVES

John Baptista Ashe¹⁹

Timothy Bloodworth²⁰
John Sevier²¹
John Steele²²
Hugh Williamson²³

PENNSYLVANIA

SENATORS

William Maclay
Robert Morris

REPRESENTATIVES AT LARGE

George Clymer
Thomas Fitzsimons
Thomas Hartley
Daniel Hiester
Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg
John Peter G. Muhlenberg
Thomas Scott
Henry Wynkoop

RHODE ISLAND

SENATORS

Theodore Foster²⁴
Joseph Stanton, Jr.²⁵

REPRESENTATIVE AT LARGE

Benjamin Bourne²⁶

SOUTH CAROLINA

SENATORS

Pierce Butler

Ralph Izard

REPRESENTATIVES

Aedanus Burke
Daniel Huger
William L. Smith²⁷
Thomas Sumter
Thomas Tudor Tucker

VIRGINIA

SENATORS

William Grayson²⁸
John Walker²⁹
James Monroe³⁰
Richard Henry Lee

REPRESENTATIVES

Theodorick Bland³¹
William B. Giles³²
John Brown
Isaac Coles
Richard Bland Lee
James Madison
Andrew Moore
John Page
Josiah Parker
Alexander White
Samuel Griffin

¹¹ The election of all four Representatives was contested, but owing to the burning of the papers and documents from the First to the Sixth Congress, by the British in 1814, it is not possible to ascertain the grounds upon which the contest was based. It is known that it related to questions of regularity and procedure, and that the decision was favorable to the sitting Members.

¹² Took his seat July 25, 1789; term to expire, as determined by lot, March 3, 1795.

¹³ Took his seat July 27, 1789; term to expire, as determined by lot, March 3, 1791.

¹⁴ Took his seat April 23, 1789.

¹⁵ Took his seat April 22, 1789.

¹⁶ Took his seat May 9, 1789.

¹⁷ Took his seat January 13, 1790; term to expire, as determined by lot, March 3, 1795.

¹⁸ Took his seat January 29, 1790; term to expire, as determined by lot, March 3, 1793.

¹⁹ Took his seat March 24, 1790.

²⁰ Took his seat April 6, 1790.

²¹ Took his seat June 16, 1790.

²² Took his seat April 19, 1790.

²³ Took his seat March 19, 1790.

²⁴ Took his seat June 25, 1790; term to expire, as determined by lot, March 3, 1791.

²⁵ Took his seat June 25, 1790; term to expire, as determined by lot, March 3, 1793.

²⁶ Took his seat December 17, 1790.

²⁷ Took his seat April 13, 1789; on April 15, 1789, David Ramsay presented a petition claiming that Smith was ineligible because at the time of his election he had not been a citizen of the United States the term of years

required by the Constitution, which was referred to the Committee on Elections; the committee reported on April 18, 1789, and on May 22, 1789, the House adopted a resolution that Mr. Smith was eligible at the time he was elected.

²⁸ Died March 12, 1790.

²⁹ Appointed to fill vacancy caused by death of William Grayson, and took his seat April 26, 1790.

³⁰ Elected to fill vacancy caused by death of William Grayson, and took his seat December 6, 1790.

³¹ Died June 1, 1790.

³² Elected to fill vacancy caused by death of Theodorick Bland, and took his seat December 7, 1790.