

Excerpts "Federalist Papers #84," 1788

Certain General and Miscellaneous Objections to the Constitution Considered and Answered
From McLEAN'S Edition, New York.
Author: Alexander Hamilton

To the People of the State of New York:

IN THE course of the foregoing review of the Constitution, I have taken notice of, and endeavored to answer most of the objections which have appeared against it. There, however, remain a few which either did not fall naturally under any particular head or were forgotten in their proper places. . .

The most considerable of the remaining objections is that the plan of the convention contains no bill of rights . . . I go further, and affirm that bills of rights, in the sense and to the extent in which they are contended for, are not only unnecessary in the proposed Constitution, but would even be dangerous. They would contain various exceptions to powers not granted; and, on this very account, would afford a colorable pretext to claim more than were granted. For why declare that things shall not be done which there is no power to do? . . .

There remains but one other view of this matter to conclude the point. The truth is . . . that the Constitution is itself, in every rational sense, and to every useful purpose, A BILL OF RIGHTS. The several bills of rights in Great Britain form its Constitution, and conversely the constitution of each State is its bill of rights. And the proposed Constitution, if adopted, will be the bill of rights of the Union. . . .

PUBLIUS.