



## Building Democracy: The Story of Legislatures

### Episode 2: The Story of Legislatures Through the Revolution

#### Description:

Welcome to Our American States. You're about to listen to the second episode of a special 6-part mini series from the National Conference of State Legislatures called Building Democracy: The Story of Legislatures. This mini series will highlight the events that shaped the way we govern today and consider what the future may hold for America's first branch of government. This episode covers the first legislatures in the United States after the Independence of the British in 1776.

#### Key Takeaways:

- In August of 1765, a group of men gather and talk about taxes, and they aren't happy. A riot ensues, damaging property of a royal official. [0:35]
- In early 1765, England's parliament struggled to pay back boatloads of debt racked up during the Seven Years War with France (around \$14B US dollars today). The solution? Tax the colonies. [4:00]
- Each colony was a unique mix of people, cultures, and history, which made for widely different political systems. This made universal taxation difficult. [6:00]
- An intercolonial communication network is formed, allowing colonies to compare notes on British actions [12:35]
- Thomas Gage, the newly appointed military governor of the unruly, powder-keg city of Boston, gets wind that John Hancock and Samuel Adams are on their way with stolen gunpowder and cannons to Lexington. But then...John Warren gets tipped off of Gage's plan and sabotages it. [19:30]
- By 1776, each of the thirteen colonies had new or reformed 'American' assemblies providing regional governance. [23:40]
- The governance of the states are firmly under American control, but each state now needs a guiding document- either a charter or constitution. [26:10]
- Tension arises between Federalist and anti-Federalist. How much power should be given to the national government and how much should be reserved for the states? The Bill of Rights is born. [32:10]

- New Jersey gives the right to vote to 'all inhabitants'. And so, from 1776 to 1807, women and African Americans participated in elections. [34:00]
- 13 colonies, once connected by an allegiance to the crown, now became 13 states, which was bound both by law and by a common belief in the principles of representative democracy. [38:50]

Guest List:

[Richard Pearce](#) - Counsel to House Research & Clerk's Office in South Carolina

[Professor Pev Squire](#) - Griffiths Chair in American Political Institutions at the University of Missouri

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Resources:

[Sons of Liberty](#)

[England's Seven Years War with France](#)

[The Stamp Act](#)

[South Carolina in the American Revolution](#)

[American Revolutionary War](#)

[First Virginia Convention](#)

[Articles of Confederation](#)

[United States Bill of Rights](#)