

## Antifederalist No. 66

### On The Power of Impeachment

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From North Carolina

Mr. JOSEPH TAYLOR objected to the provision made for impeaching. He urged that there could be no security from it, as the persons accused were triable by the Senate, who were a part of the legislature themselves; that, while men were fallible, the senators were liable to errors, especially in a case where they were concerned themselves. . . .

Mr. [Timothy] BLOODWORTH wished to be informed, whether this sole power of impeachment, given to the House of Representatives, deprived the state of the power of impeaching any of its members. . . .

Mr. JOSEPH TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, the objection is very strong. If there be but one body to try, where are we? If any tyranny or oppression should arise, how are those who perpetrated such oppression to be tried and punished? By a tribunal consisting of the very men who assist in such tyranny. Can any tribunal be found, in any community, who will give judgment against their own actions? Is it the nature of man to decide against himself? I am obliged to the worthy member from New Hanover for assisting me with objections. None can impeach but the representatives; and the impeachments are to be determined by the senators, who are one of the branches of power which we dread under this Constitution.... the words "sole power of impeachment" were so general, and might admit of such a latitude of construction, as to extend to every legislative member upon the continent, so as to preclude the representatives of the different states from impeaching....

Mr. [William] PORTER wished to be informed, if every officer, who was a creature of that Constitution, was to be tried by the Senate -- whether such officers, and those who had complaints against them, were to go from the extreme parts of the continent to the seat of government, to adjust disputes. . . .

Mr. J. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, I conceive that, if this Constitution be adopted, we shall have a large number of officers in North Carolina under the appointment of Congress. We shall undoubtedly, for instance, have a great number of tax-gatherers. If any of these officers shall do wrong, when we come to fundamental principles, we find that we have no way to punish them but by going to Congress, at an immense distance, whither we must carry our witnesses. Every gentlemen must see, in these cases, that oppressions will arise. I conceive that they cannot be tried elsewhere. I consider that the Constitution will be explained by the word "sole." If they did not mean to retain a general power of impeaching, there was no occasion for saying the "sole power." I consider therefore that oppressions will arise. If I am oppressed, I must go to the House of Representatives to complain. I consider that, when mankind are about to part with rights, they ought only to part with those rights which they can with convenience relinquish, and not such as must involve them in distresses....

I observe that, when these great men are met in Congress, in consequence of this power, they will have the power of appointing all the officers of the United States. My experience in life shows me that the friends of the members of the legislature will get the offices. These senators and members of the House of Representatives will appoint their friends to all offices. These officers will be great men, and they will have numerous deputies under them. The receiver-general of the taxes of North Carolina must be one of the greatest men in the country. Will he come to me for his taxes? No. He will send his deputy, who will have special instructions to oppress me. How am I to be redressed? I shall be told that I must go to Congress, to get him impeached. This being the case, whom am I to impeach? A friend of the representatives of North Carolina. For, unhappily for us, these men will have too much weight for us; they will have friends in the government who will be inclined against us, and thus we may be oppressed with impunity.