

Maryland General Assembly and undoubtedly recognizing the electoral successes of 1788, the Federalists fashioned a statewide election process which would insure a victory for all of their candidates. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives were to be residents of one of six Congressional districts but were to be elected by the vote of all qualified voters throughout the state. Similarly, there were to be five presidential electors elected from the Western Shore and three presidential electors from the Eastern Shore again with votes being cast throughout the entire state for all eight positions.¹⁵

The previous 18 month public debates over the ratification of the new Constitution had not altered voter sentiment as the Federalist candidates for presidential elector and Congress captured every position when Marylanders first went to the polls to participate in the process of selecting a President of the United States on January 7, 1789. An estimated 7,700 persons cast 51,354 votes for 22 different individuals.¹⁶

The leading Federalist vote getter was John Rogers whose 7,665 votes far exceeded the 2,278 received by the leading Anti-Federalist, Jeremiah T. Chase. Even the lowest Federalist vote getter (William Richardson on the Eastern Shore, 5,402) received 3,124 more votes than the leading Anti-Federalist. The Anti-Federalists, having incurred a string of losses in the battle over the Constitution, were obviously weakened by January 1789. Two of their candidates for elector on the Western Shore withdrew or disavowed their affiliation prior to election day.¹⁷ However, in Baltimore, Anne Arundel and Harford Counties, some Anti-Federalist candidates did out-poll some Federalist candidates and there was evidence of ticket-splitting in Prince George's and Worcester Counties. Thus, by implementing a statewide scheme for electing the presidential electors the Federalist plan had worked to perfection.

Maryland's first members of the electoral college met on February 4, 1789 to cast votes for President and Vice President and without hesitation six votes were cast for George Washington. Under the new Constitution, each elector had two votes of equal weight and there was concern that votes for John Adams might cause the election to be disputed. Without rapid means of communication to verify rumors over a scheme for a northern presidency, one of Maryland's electors, William Tilghman, wrote to a friend, "Had we given our vote to Adams he might have been thrown too far forward. I hope we have made the General's election altogether safe."¹⁸ Therefore, acting with political caution, Maryland's other six votes were cast for Robert Hanson Harrison; the Chief Justice of Maryland.

1789 ELECTION SUMMARY

Candidate (Party)	Popular Vote		Electoral Vote	
	Md.	U.S.	Md.	U.S.
John Adams (F)		(not available)		34
John Hancock		"		4
Robert H. Harrison		"	6	6
John Jay		"		9
George Washington (F)	7,665	"	6	69
Others		"		16