

Second Continental Congress

1775-1789

Source: Cogliano, Francis D. (2000). *Revolutionary America, 1763–1815: A Political History*. London & New York City

By the time this Second Continental Congress convened, hostilities had already broken out between British troops and its American colonists at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. The Congress constituted a new federation that it first named the United Colonies, and in 1776, renamed the United States of America. The Congress began convening in Philadelphia, on May 10, 1775, with representatives from 12 of the 13 colonies.

The Second Congress functioned as the *de facto* federation government at the outset of the Revolutionary War by raising militias, directing strategy, appointing diplomats, and writing. All 13 colonies were represented when the Congress adopted the Lee Resolution, which declared independence from Britain on July 2, 1776, and the Congress unanimously agreed to the Declaration of Independence two days later.

Congress functioned as the provisional government of the United States of America through March 1, 1781, when congress became what is now often called the Confederation Congress. During this period, it successfully managed the war effort, drafted the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, adopted the first U.S. constitution, secured diplomatic recognition and support from foreign nations, and resolved state land claims west of the Appalachian Mountains.



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