



The Classical Foundations of the American Constitution: Prevailing Wisdom

David J. Bederman

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The framers of the American Constitution were substantially influenced by ancient history and classical political theory, as exemplified by their education, the availability of classical readings, and their inculcation in classical republican values. This volume explores how the framing generation deployed classical learning to develop many of the essential structural aspects of the Constitution: federalism, separation of powers, a bicameral legislature, independent courts, and the war and foreign relations powers. Also examined are very contemporary constitutional debates, for which there were classical inspirations, including sovereign immunity, executive privilege, line-item vetoes, and the electoral college. Combining techniques of intellectual history, classical studies, and constitutional interpretation, this book makes a unique contribution to our understanding of contemporary constitutionalism.

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