

SHOULD TENNESSEE SECEDE?

The date is April 10th 1861, and the Tennessee state legislature is convening in Nashville on whether or not to secede. They have already defeated one such vote in February. Our class is going to be the Tennessee special convention on secession. Each of you is going to be part of a faction:

1. Constitutional Unionists (led by Andrew Johnson)—against secession
2. The old Whig party (even though they did not run a presidential candidate, they were still a strong party in Tennessee) – against secession
3. Fire-eaters—for secession AND WAR
4. Southern Democrats (Breckinridge—and a few for Douglas)—for secession, but leery about the war.
5. Undecided. After reading the FACT SHEET, you will make up your own mind. Be ready to be swayed one way or the other during the Convention on Monday.

Each GROUP is going to create a “Position Paper” justifying their party’s (or Undecided concerns if you are “Undecided”) decision on voting for or against secession. The preliminary paper is due at the end of class today. You will work in your groups, but individual grades will be different as I will also be keeping track of individual “on task behavior” and contributions. Each group will choose: A) Leader; B) Researcher(s); C) Secretary; D) Banner Designer(s). The final paper is due on Friday. It should be at least two typewritten, 1.5 spaced pages with 10 font and normal margins. On Friday each of you will argue as a party (or the concerns of the “Undecided) for or against secession. At the end of the convention a vote will be held. You will be graded on both the position Paper, and your contribution during debates in the Convention

Position Papers are formal documents. Follow this guideline:

We the _____ Party propose ...(give an introduction setting the stage, remember that you are trying to convince the people reading this to change their minds and join your side. Be persuasive in both tone and content.)

To prove this let the facts be submitted to the world.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
6. ETC.

If you are Undecided your group will formulate a Position Paper that addresses the following issues

- Questions you want answered
- Requirements you would need to EITHER stay or secede (be specific-don’t just say “extend slavery”, rather state exactly how it would be accomplished.
- Concerns over the upcoming war based on BOTH secession and staying.
- List consequences of BOTH seceding and staying

In your groups you will also create a campaign poster It will include your party affiliation, a snazzy slogan, a great quote, and at least 3 symbols.

This is going to be 6 daily grades

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND ORDINANCE dissolving the federal relations between the State of Tennessee and the United States of America.

First. We, the people of the State of Tennessee, waiving any expression of opinion as to the abstract doctrine of secession, but asserting the right, as a free and independent people, to alter, reform, or abolish our form of government in such manner as we think proper, do ordain and declare that all the laws and ordinances by which the State of Tennessee became a member of the Federal Union of the United States of America are hereby abrogated and annulled, and that all the rights, functions, and powers which by any of said laws and ordinances were conveyed to the Government of the United States, and to absolve ourselves from all the obligations, restraints, and duties incurred thereto; and do hereby henceforth become a free, sovereign, and independent State.

Second. We furthermore declare and ordain that article 10, sections 1 and 2, of the constitution of the State of Tennessee, which requires members of the General Assembly and all officers, civil and military, to take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States be, and the same are hereby, abrogated and annulled, and all parts of the constitution of the State of Tennessee making citizenship of the United States a qualification for office and recognizing the Constitution of the United States as the supreme law of this State are in like manner abrogated and annulled.

Third. We furthermore ordain and declare that all rights acquired and vested under the Constitution of the United States, or under any act of Congress passed in pursuance thereof, or under any laws of this State, and not incompatible with this ordinance, shall remain in force and have the same effect as if this ordinance had not been passed.

[sent to referendum 6 May 1861 by the legislature, and approved by the voters by a vote of 104,471 to 47,183 on 8 June 1861]