

## GROWTH AND REFORM

## Viewpoints

In the 1830s, Senators John C. Calhoun of South Carolina and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts were the most prominent spokesmen for sectionalism and nationalism, respectively. Webster avidly defended the supremacy of the federal government and the U.S. Constitution, and Calhoun asserted the inviolable rights of the states. In 1833, Calhoun delivered a speech defending the southern way of life and criticizing the federal government for overreaching its powers. More than 40 members of Congress from 12 southern states signed his statement. In 1830, Webster debated the issue of state versus national sovereignty with South Carolina Senator Robert Hayne. ♦ *As you read the viewpoints below, consider the justifications and reasoning behind each senator's statements. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

## Calhoun and Webster

## Speech, 1833, by South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun

"Slavery is a domestic institution. It belongs to the States, each for itself to decide, whether it shall be established or not; and if it be established, whether it should be abolished or not. . . . [W]e hold that the Federal Government has no right to extend or restrict slavery, no more than to establish or abolish it; nor has it any right whatever to distinguish between the domestic institutions of one State, or section, and another, in order to favor one and discourage the other. . . . It is not for [the North] nor for the Federal Government to determine, whether our domestic institution is good or bad; or whether it should be repressed or preserved. It belongs to us, and us only, to decide such questions.

Source: Transcribed by Trina S. Rossman from John C. Calhoun, "The Southern Address," in Richard K. Crallé, ed., *The Works of John C. Calhoun* (Columbia, S.C.: Printed by A.S. Johnston, 1851), vol. VI, pp. 290–313. Available online at [sciway3.net/2001/john-c-calhoun/SAddress.htm](http://sciway3.net/2001/john-c-calhoun/SAddress.htm).

## Speech, January 26, 1830, by Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster

"This government, Sir, . . . is not the creature of State legislatures; nay, . . . the people brought it into existence, established it, and have hitherto supported it, for the very purpose, amongst others, of imposing certain salutary restraints on State sovereignties. . . . Sir, the very chief end, the main design, for which the whole Constitution was framed and adopted, was to establish a government that should not be obliged to act through State agency. . . . [The Constitution declares] that *"the Constitution, and the laws of the United States made in pursuance thereof, shall be the supreme law of the land. . . ."* . . . No State law is to be valid which comes in conflict with the Constitution, or any law of the United States passed in pursuance of it."

Source: Available online at [www.constitution.org/hwdebate/webstr2d.htm](http://www.constitution.org/hwdebate/webstr2d.htm).

## Questions to Think About

1. According to Calhoun, who or what should determine whether slavery is good or bad?
2. According to Webster, what was one reason that the people established a federal government?
3. **Detect Point of View** How do the two senators' views on the political structure of the nation differ?