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The United States Constitution gives no authority to the federal government over education. In fact, education never even is mentioned in the document.

This, however, was no mere oversight. On the contrary, the Founding Fathers were strong supporters of education. Samuel Adams once said: "*If Virtue & Knowledge are diffused among the People, they will never be enslav'd. This will be their great Security.*"¹

Besides Adams, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and many other Founding Fathers spoke passionately about the importance of education. In 1810, Jefferson wrote, "*No one more sincerely wishes the spread of information among mankind than I do, and none has greater confidence in its effect towards supporting free and good government.*"² Years earlier, in his Farewell Address, George Washington reminded people to, "*[p]romote then as an object of primary importance, Institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.*"³

One might ask, if education is so important, why wasn't it included in our Nation's founding text? It was exactly because education is so important that the Founders made no reference to it.

The Founding Fathers wanted to make education the best it possibly could be. That is why matters involving education were left to the States and local communities. The Founding Fathers knew that the federal government could never oversee education as well as those closest to the students – their parents and local leaders.

Writing in *The Federalist Papers*, James Madison expressed this notion eloquently when he wrote:

*The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite. The former will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation, and foreign commerce; with which last the power of taxation will, for the most part, be connected. The powers reserved to the several states will extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement and prosperity of the State.*⁴

The drafters incorporated this concept of federalism into the Constitution by way of the Tenth Amendment. The Tenth Amendment states: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the

¹ Adams, S, Letter to James Warren, FoundersQuotes.com, <<http://foundersquotes.com/founding-fathers-quote/if-virtue-knowledge-are-diffused-among-the-people-they-will-never-be-enslavd/>>

² Jefferson, T, Letter to Trustees for the Lottery of East Tennessee College, FoundersQuotes.com, <<http://foundersquotes.com/founding-fathers-quote/no-one-more-sincerely-wishes-the-spread-of-information-among-mankind-than-i-do/>>

³ Washington, G, Part of Farewell Address, FoundersQuotes.com, <<http://foundersquotes.com/founding-fathers-quote/promote-then-as-an-object-of-primary-importance-institutions-for-the-general-diffusion-of-knowledge/>>

⁴ Madison, J, *Federalist Papers* #45, jpands.org, <<http://www.jpands.org/hacienda/comm19.html>>