

Civil Dialogue

Historical Background

The United States was founded on ideas from the Enlightenment, a time when people believed it was important to share ideas and listen to different opinions. During the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, delegates were able to keep **open minds** and **listen** to one another's ideas. They **advocated** for what they believed. Even though they had different opinions on big issues, like how states should be represented, how the economy should work, and slavery, they listened to each other and were able to **collaborate** to create the United States Constitution.

Later, other Americans practiced civil dialogue to write their state constitutions. In Utah, elected officials to the Utah Constitutional Convention also had strong, differing opinions. One big issue was whether to give women the right to vote, known as **suffrage**. They didn't all agree at first, but the use of civil dialogue allowed them to work through their disagreements and eventually create the Utah Constitution, which did include women's right to vote.

Today, civil dialogue allows us to keep our constitutional republic strong. Being open to others' ideas, even if we disagree, allows us to make better decisions together. This is one of the most important ways that we ensure our government stays "by the people and for the people."