

# American colonists believed Moses initiated a proto-democracy.

In their reading, Moses set out a 4-century pattern for representative democracy — before Greece or Rome — lasting until king Saul. Under a series of anointed 'judges,' Israelites chose their own leaders, at the street, neighborhood, local, and tribal level.

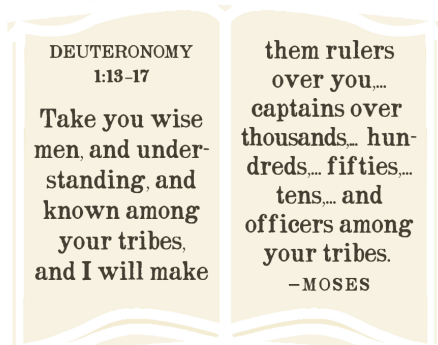
THERE'S NO EXTERNAL PROOF THAT THINGS REALLY HAPPENED THAT WAY.



BUT THE COLONISTS THOUGHT IT DID—AND THAT WAS THEIR OPERATING PRINCIPLE.



In their 1638 convention, the founders of Connecticut read this passage:



SEE? THE CHOICE OF MAGISTRATES BELONGS UNTO THE PEOPLE... BECAUSE THE FOUNDATION OF AUTHORITY IS LAID, FIRSTLY, IN THE FREE CONSENT OF THE PEOPLE!



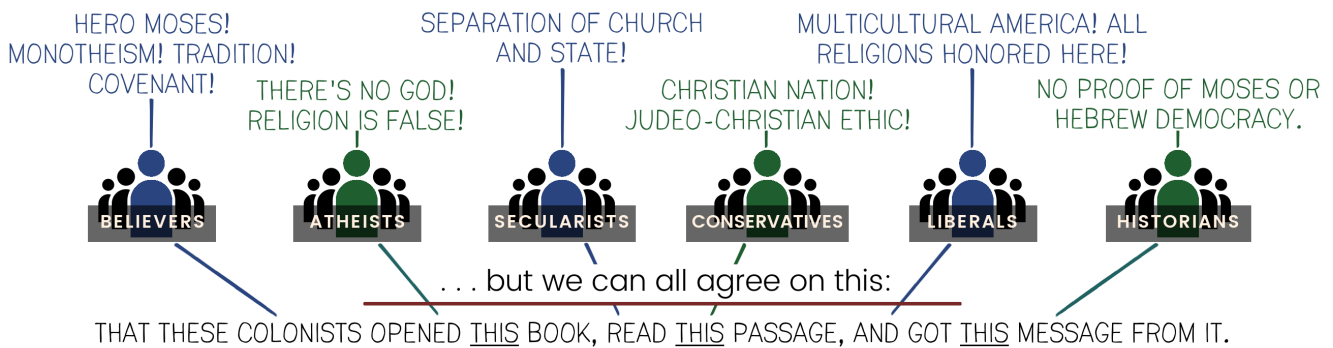
OUR HERO JOHN CALVIN THOUGHT THE SAME THING ABOUT THIS PASSAGE NEARLY A CENTURY BACK!

The resulting charter, the **Fundamental Orders of Connecticut**, is a cornerstone of American thought. All colonial charters that came after it reflected its ideas.

This reading of Moses' words became the air our Founders breathed.

It's where they got their ideas for democracy — as well as from the Greeks, the Roman Republic, contemporary philosophers, and the Iroquois Confederacy (whom Franklin and others observed with fascination and copied).

So. We may not agree on everything . . .



Every textbook should include these facts. Every student in America should know the role of Moses' contribution — **that the people should choose their own leaders, from among themselves** — and should commit to memory this phrase from our beginnings:

**"The foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people."**

