

Source E, A, D, C, and B, in descending order of reliability, ultimately support the view that the Wilmot Proviso failed to provide the basis for a solution of the sectional issue, that which is the issue of slavery between the Northern Free States and the Southern slave states particularly as it pertains to the acquisition of territories in the West. This is most explicitly supported in sources E, D, C, and B listed in descending order of reliability, by the conclusions that the Proviso raised further political, territorial, religious, and ethical issues and brought into question the interpretations of the Constitution.

Alternatively, sources E and A in descending order of reliability provide the most obvious support for the perspective that the Wilmot Proviso did in fact provide the basis for a solution of the sectional issue of slavery through the suggestion that the Wilmot Proviso was in theory intended to resolve the divisive issue of slavery, although sources D, C, and B implicitly provide support by collectively supporting the idea that the Wilmot Proviso at least encouraged political dialogue of slavery in America.

Source A, a direct excerpt from the Wilmot Proviso in 1846, at best provides contextual knowledge of the Proviso itself and its political intents but does not, as a legal statement, provide information about the later impact of the amendment. Without revealing the political, social, etc. implications of the amendment, source A is limited in its contextual reliability to determine whether the Proviso provided a basis for a resolution of the sectional issue, but taken in the context of its source reliability, the conclusion can be reached that source A supports the perspective that the Wilmot Proviso at least *intended* to provide a basis for a solution to the issue of slavery. Proposed by poorly known Congressman David Wilmot of the Northern state of Pennsylvania, the amendment reflects Wilmot's desire to halt the extension of slavery into the territories but lacks a direct anti-North or anti-South connotation, a neutrality that is a direct reflection of Wilmot's Northern status and Southern sympathies. As Wilmot stands without an ulterior political agenda to propel his own political influence or aggressively support either the North or the South as supported by source E, the Proviso can be taken at face value for its desire to achieve a degree of balance for the pro-slave and anti-slave states. As described by source E, a modern American analysis that focuses on the issues raised by the Proviso and offers a reflective and analytical perspective free of the political influences of the time, Wilmot's proposal to offer Texas a slave state with the guarantee that additional territories would remain free addressed the desire of politicians on both sides of the sectional issue. Proposed two years after Polk's last year as president, it must be assumed that the topic of manifest destiny was relevant issue in Congress; therefore, by addressing the acquisition of territory from Mexico, the Wilmot Proviso proposes a solution that relates to the future state of America, thus strengthening the argument that the Proviso provided a basis for a solution of the sectional issue.

While valid when suggested in the provenance of sources A and E, the aforementioned argument is essentially founded on theory regarding the probable outcome of the Proviso. Although it can be concluded that the Proviso was intended for the purpose of settling issues, one cannot conclude from this information that this amendment was successful in this pursuit.

The Wilmot Proviso did not provide the basis for a solution of the sectional issue as supported by source B, which highlights that the Proviso encouraged the social divide between the North and the South in regards to slavery. Although Southern Senator Calhoun presents this argument as a final plea in the support of Southern rights and thus relies heavily on emotive language to gain political leverage for



the slave states, the source usefully provides evidence of the political dissension between the North and South. The persuasive language serves to enhance the reader's comprehension of socio-political effect of the sectional divide by highlighting Calhoun's suggestion that the Southern desire for justice was least served by the Proviso but is instead to be found in the cooperation of the North. Instead of seeking mutual compromise, the Proviso can be said to have encouraged the perception of an antagonist and protagonist between the North and the South. By bringing the issue of justice to the Congressional table, the Wilmot Proviso essentially galvanized the South, based on Calhoun's argument, to fight for a Northern concession, not a solution to the issue of slavery.

The perspective that the Wilmot Proviso did not provide a basis for a solution of the sectional issue but instead encouraged the expression of greater political dissent between the North and the South is strengthened by source E, whose offers superior validity and reliability in comparison to the other sources as a modern reference free from a pro-Northern or pro-Southern political platform and assumedly supported by a variety of historical sources. With a neutral tone, source E states that the Proviso was rejected by the Senate twice but passed by the Northern-dominated House twice. If the Wilmot Proviso were to have achieved compromise between the North and the South in regards to slavery, Congress would have to have been in majority support of the amendment. In effect, the Proviso allowed for the expression of the Congressional divide between the two parties.

The Wilmot Proviso did not provide a basis for a solution of the section issue as supported by sources E, D, C, and B, which are explicitly and implicitly linked by the thread that the Proviso encouraged dispute regarding the proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States. As the Constitution is the basis for the socio-political framework of the America, a solution of the sectional issue of slavery could not have been achieved when both the North and the South called into question that role and influence of sections of the Constitution. Instead of achieving compromise, both the North and the South utilized the constitution to their advantage. Senator Seward's concession in source C that slavery was a right recognized by the Constitution paired with Calhoun's persuasive defense that the Constitution was the backbone to the South's ability to legally perform slavery and uphold the Fugitive Slave Act, suggest one interpretation of the Constitution, although Source E ultimately argues that the word of the Constitution in regards to slavery in the territories could be overruled by the legislative power of Congress. These conflicting perspectives call into question that application of the Constitution and the extent to which it protects state, territorial, and regional rights from the jurisdiction of the federal government. Source D, as a resolution from the Nashville Convention that displays clear pro-Southern tendencies, is effective in its ability to address the issues of jurisdiction that arose in response to the Wilmot Proviso; although argued solely by Southern leaders and therefore limited in its objectivity, source D effectively provides a perspective from the South developed after years of dispute over the Wilmot Proviso, thus implying the longevity of the sectional issue despite the Proviso's proposal. Source D again raises the argument that the states were entitlement to protect territory despite the will of Congress and that the exclusion of slavery in the territories would be in direct violation to the Constitution. This perspective highlights the political dissent occurring in the South and is proposal presented in the context of possible secession of the Southern States. This suggests that the Wilmot Proviso in fact encouraged the division between the North and the South. The statement in



Source D that the people of the states held greater political power than the governments is of particular relevance, as it is an allusion to the idea of nullification, which suggests that states have the right to overrule federal law if said law is deemed illegal, presented by Calhoun, of source B. This allusion in the context of the two sources suggests that the Wilmot Proviso not only divided America in regards to the interpretation of her Constitution but encouraged the independent political risings of the Southern States in attempt to gain back the power lost, as stated by source B. Ultimately, source B's analysis of the correct interpretation of the Constitution is limited in its reliability, as it suggest that a Constitutional Amendment be made to restore the South's singular power of slavery but does not consider the validity of amendments such as the Wilmot Proviso.

The Wilmot Proviso did not provide a basis for a solution of the sectional issue as suggested by source C, which raises moral issues regarding slavery and the role of American free citizens. Although in clear support of the eradication of slavery and obvious in his references to a "higher power" over the Constitution, Senator Seward raises a point missed by the other documents: that not only is the political state of the Union called into question by the Wilmot Proviso, but the role of America as an ethical entity. Seward expertly links religion to a Constitutional interpretation through the suggestion that the as a land of equality the people must support freedom, which is as equally recognized by the constitution as slavery. Therefore, the Proviso not only encouraged political strife but drove the issue to a moral level while simultaneously highlighting the disparities between the different Constitutional interpretations, which selectively weigh state rights, Southern rights, the legality of slavery, or the institution of freedom.

Although the Wilmot Proviso effectively encouraged discussion of territorial slavery in regards to morals and politics, the ultimate effect of the proviso was war, not peace. Source C's contextual reliability is strengthened by its suggestion that the outcome of such disputes would be war, an implication that is counterproductive to the settlement of the sectional issue of slavery. A solution is inherently peaceful, while the war against slavery, which source C references with a vigor that must be described a supportive if not slightly threatening toward the South, is inherently a divisor, much as is the Southern secession underlying the Nashville Convention in source D.

Although intended to promote a nearly neutral solution for slavery in America's new territories, the Wilmot Proviso failed to provide a basis for a solution of the sectional issue of slavery. Instead of strengthening communication between the various political parties of the North and South during the time from 1846 to 1850, the Wilmot Proviso called into question the strength of the American Constitution, the role of the federal government, the role of equality in America, and the balance of compromise. As the conflict escalated without a clear solution, the Wilmot Proviso provided an opportunity for those such as Calhoun and Seward to gain political platforms as the long withstanding socio-political foundation of America was questioned as a reliable means to protect the rights of individuals in the nation. The Civil War was imminent, not the peace envisioned by Wilmot as he proposed the amendment in 1846.