



## **STATES' RIGHTS**

Probably the simplest, or at least the clearest, difference between the North and South involved the concept of states' rights. **States' rights** is the belief that the state's interests should take precedence over the interests of the national government.

Northern states believed that, in order for the United States to function as one Union, political decisions should be made that would benefit the entire country. They believed that all states should abide by laws made by Congress, signed by the president, or decreed by the courts.

Southern states, on the other hand, believed deeply in the idea of states' rights. They thought that states had the right to govern themselves and to decide what would be best for their own needs and situation. They believed that politicians from a state like Maine or New York could not possibly understand or care about Georgia or South Carolina.

**1. Define “state’s rights.”**

**2. Why did the South believe that the national government should not interfere with state governing?**

**3. Briefly compare the views of the North and South on the issue of state’s rights.**