What’s in a Name?

When George Washington took office in 1789, the new government had numerous details to resolve including questions of title, ceremony, and etiquette. In fact, one of Congress’s earliest debates centered on Washington. What should they call him?

Suggestions ranged from “His Highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of their Liberties” to “His Exalted High Mightiness.” Washington and Congress rejected them all, opting for the simpler “President of the United States” – later shortened to “Mr. President.”