

Edward Carrington to Henry Knox, Richmond, 13 March 1788

...the present politics of this State, amongst the discerning, are divisible into three very distinct classes—Antifederalists who are for a direct dismemberment of the Union—Federalists who make the Union their great & first object, but are for carrying their efforts to amend the constitution as far as possible within that object,—and Federalists who are for adopting without amendment—the two latter classes will certainly coincide in the point of Nine States having adopted, and would form a very great Majority could the Convention be formed of the most deserving in the State—but unfortunately the flame now raging amongst the body of the people, will bring in many very weak & desperate Characters, who declare in the opposition, to the exclusion of better Men who will not so commit themselves on either side—the danger is, that a great proportion of the Assembly will be so overborn by the declamatory powers of Mr. Henry as to be deceived into his measures although their ultimate views may be entirely different. it is held out by Mr. Henry and his demagogues that Virga. is so important that she can bring nine or even 12 States to her Measures. I assure you my dear Friend that I feel more anxiety upon the present occasion than ever I felt during the War. It has led me to commit myself in an election for a County where the majority are opposed to me in sentiment, and it is highly probable I shall be rejected, yet I could not tamely submit the measure to its fate without such an effort.

P.S. I shall set out for N. York about the first of apl.

Cite as: *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009. Original source: Ratification by the States, Volume VIII: Virginia, No. 1