

**Cincinnatus V: To James Wilson, Esquire, *New York Journal*,
29 November 1787**

Sir, In my former observations on your speech, to your fellow-citizens, explanatory and defensive of the new constitution; it has appeared, by arguments to my judgment unanswerable, that by ratifying the constitution, as the convention proposed it, the people will leave the liberty of the press, and the trial by jury, in civil cases, to the mercy of their rulers—that the project is to burthen them with enormous taxes, in order to raise and maintain armies, for the purposes of ambition and arbitrary power—that this power is to be vested in an aristocratic senate, who will either be themselves the tyrants, or the support of tyranny, in a president, who will know how to manage them, so as to make that body at once the instrument and the shield of his absolute authority.—Even the Roman Emperors found it necessary to have a senate for this purpose. To compass this object, we have seen powers, in every branch of government, in violation of all principle, and all safety condensed in this aristocratic senate: we have seen the representative, or democratic branch, weakened exactly in proportion to the strengthening the aristocratic, or, what means the same thing, and will be more pleasing to your ear, Mr. Wilson, the republican branch. We have seen with what cunning the power of impeachment is apparently given to the representative of the people, but really to the senate; since, as they advise these measures of government, which experience has shewn, are the general matters of impunity the executive officers will be sure of impeachment when they act in conformity to their will. Impeachment will therefore have no terrors, but for those who displease or oppose the senate.

Let us suppose that the privy councils who advise the executive government in England, were vested with the sole power of trying impeachments; would any man say that this would not render that body absolute; and impeachment to all popular purposes, negatory? I shall appeal to those very citizens, Mr. Wilson, whom you was misleading, for the propriety of what I am going to observe. They know that their constitution was democratic—that it secured the powers of government in the body of the people. They have seen an aristocratical party rise up against this constitution, and without the aid of such a senate, but from the mere influence of wealth, however unduly obtained, they have seen this aristocracy, under the original title of republicans, procure such a preference in the legislature, as to appoint a majority of the state members in the late convention, out of their body. Had such a senate, as they have now proposed, been part of your constitution, would the popular part of it, have been in effect more than a name. Can your fellow citizens then doubt that these men planned this senate, to effect the very purpose which has been the constant object of their endeavors, that is to overthrow the present constitution. And can you, O citizens of Philadelphia, so soon forget the constitution which you formed, for which you fought, which you have solemnly engaged to defend—can you so soon forget all this, as to be the willing ministers of that ambition, which aims only at making you its footstool—the confirmers of that constitution, which gives your aristocratic enemies their wish, and must trample your state constitution in the dust. Reflect a moment—who wish to erect

an aristocracy among you—Mr. Wilson and his party; who were your delegates in framing the constitution now proposed to you—Mr. Wilson, and his party; who harangues you to smooth its passage to your approbation—Mr. Wilson; who have you chosen to approve of it in your state convention—Mr. Wilson.—O sense where is your guard! shame where is your blush! . . .

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