

John De Witt III, Boston *American Herald*, 5 November 1787 (excerpts)

These considerations, added to their share above mentioned in the Executive department must give them a decided superiority over the House of Representatives. But that superiority is greatly enhanced, when we consider the difference of time for which they are chosen. They will have become adepts in the mystery of administration, while the House of Representatives may be composed perhaps two thirds of members, just entering into office, little used to the course of business, and totally unacquainted with the means made use of to accomplish it. Very possible also in a country where they are total strangers. But, my fellow-citizens, the important question here arises, who are this House of Representatives? “A representative Assembly, says the celebrated Mr. Adams, is the sense of the people, and the perfection of the portrait, consists in the likeness.” Can this Assembly be said to contain the sense of the people? Do they resemble the people in any one single feature? Do you represent your wants, your grievances, your wishes, in person? If that is impracticable, have you a right to send one of your townsmen for that purpose? Have you a right to send one from your county? Have you a right to send more than one for every thirty thousand of you? Can he be presumed knowing to your different, peculiar situations—your abilities to pay publick taxes, when they ought to be abated, and when encreased? Or is there any possibility of giving him information? All these questions must be answered in the negative. But how are these men to be chosen? Is there any other way than by dividing the State into districts? May not you as well at once invest your annual Assemblies with the power of choosing them—where is the essential difference? The nature of the thing will admit of none. Nay, you give them the power to prescribe the mode. They may invest it in themselves. If you choose them yourselves, you must take them upon credit, and elect those persons you know only by common fame. Even this privilege is denied you annually, through fear that you might withhold the shadow of controul over them. In this view of the System, let me sincerely ask you, where is the people in this House of Representatives? Where is the boasted popular part of this much admired System? Are they not couzin germans in every sense to the Senate? May they not with propriety be termed an Assistant Aristocratical Branch, who will be infinitely more inclined to co-operate and compromise with each other, than to be the careful guardians of the rights of their constituents? Who is there among you would not start at being told, that instead of your present House of Representatives, consisting of members chosen from every town, your future Houses were to consist of but ten in number, and these to be chosen by districts? What man among you would betray his country and approve of it? And yet how infinitely preferable to the plan proposed? In the one case the elections would be annual, the persons elected would reside in the center of you, their interests would be yours, they would be subject to your immediate controul, and nobody to consult in their deliberations—But in the other, they are chosen for double the time, during which, however well disposed, they become strangers to the very people choosing them, they reside at a distance from you, you have no controul over them, you

cannot observe their conduct, and they have to consult and finally be guided by twelve other States, whose interests are, in all material points, directly opposed to yours. Let me again ask you, What citizen is there in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that would deliberately consent laying aside the mode proposed, that the several Senates of the several States, should be the popular Branch, and together, form one National House of Representatives? And yet one moment's attention will evince to you, that this blessed proposed Representation of the People, this apparent faithful Mirror, this striking Likeness, is to be still further refined, and more Aristocratical four times told. Where now is the exact ballance which has been so diligently attended to? Where lies the security of the people? What assurances have they that either their taxes will not be exacted but in the greatest emergencies, and then sparingly, or that standing armies will be raised and supported for the very plausible purpose only of cantoning them upon their frontiers? There is but one answer to these questions. They have none. Nor was it intended by the makers they should have, for meaning to make a different use of the latter, they never will be at a loss for ways and means to expend the former. They do not design to beg a second time. Knowing the danger of frequent applications to the people, they ask for the whole at once, and are now by their conduct, teasing and absolutely haunting of you into a compliance. If you choose all these things should take place, by all means gratify them. Go, and establish this Government, which is unanimously confessed imperfect, yet incapable of alteration. Intrust it to men, subject to the same unbounded passions and infirmities as yourselves, possessed with an insatiable thirst for power, and many of them, carrying in them vices, tho' tinsel'd and concealed, yet, in themselves, not less dangerous than those more naked and exposed. But in the mean time, add an additional weight to the stone that now covers the remains of the Great WARREN and MONTGOMERY; prepare an apology for the blood and treasure, profusely spent to obtain those rights which you now so tamely part with. Conceal yourselves from the ridicule of your enemies, and bring your New-England spirits to a level with the contempt of mankind. Henceforth you may sit yourselves down with propriety, and say, Blessed are they that never expect, for they shall not be disappointed.

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