

An Old Whig VII, Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 28 November 1787

It is true that the continental convention has directed their proposed constitution to be laid before a convention of delegates to be chosen in each state, “for their assent and ratification,” which seems to preclude the idea of any power in the several conventions, of proposing any alterations, or indeed of even rejecting the plan proposed, if they should disapprove of it. Still, however, the question recurs, what authority the late convention had to bind the people of the United States, to any particular form of government, or to forbid them to adopt such form of government as they should think fit...Had the convention any right to bind the people to the form of government they should propose? Let us consider this matter. . . .

The late convention were chosen by the general assembly of each state; they had the sanction of Congress;—for what? To consider what alterations were necessary to be made in the articles of confederation. What have they done? They have made a new constitution for the United States. I will not say, that in doing so, they have exceeded their authority; but on the other hand, I trust that no man of understanding amongst them will pretend to say, that any thing they did or could do, was of the least avail to lessen the rights of the people to judge for themselves in the last resort. This right, is perhaps, unalienable, but at all events, there is no pretence for saying that this right was ever meant to be surrendered up into the hands of the late continental convention. . . .

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.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-03-14-02-0066>
[accessed 04 Sep 2012]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XIV: Commentaries on the Constitution, No. 2