

Demosthenes Minor, *Gazette of the State of Georgia*, 15 November 1787

Friends and fellow citizens: Though I am not emboldened to write with the confidence of the "Soldier," and notwithstanding I expect not to affect your auditory nerves with such peculiar titillations as the atticisms of a "Virginius" excited, yet my zeal, grounded upon knowledge and guided by prudence and charity, induces me, devoid of the extravagances of an irregular fancy, to address you on the present critical era and important crisis of public affairs. Important let me call it, for never have we beheld a period more big with consequence. The speedy compliance with the requisitions proposed to your acceptance by the Federal Convention reflects the highest honor on the worthy inhabitants of this town, and abundant reason will you have to exclaim: "Praised be the Ruler of all sublunary things, that we could see so far into the dark womb of futurity, that we were so enlightened as to approbate that system of government which the collected wisdom of the nation had recommended to our adoption." Yet, my countrymen, be not under the fond delusion that it will have no opposers, for, rely upon it, that many who cannot immediately view its inherent and essential perfections, notwithstanding the comparative are obvious, will suggest dangers and affect a superior discernment to render themselves conspicuous; and, in fact oppositions will arise from a variety of sources, for never did anything of a similar nature exist without it. But, animated by a noble and enthusiastic warmth in the cause of freedom, let their opposition and calumny meet with your contempt, its due recompense; the fears of the jealous, the ignorant, and uninformed, allay by bringing reason to your aid, which will prevail over them and constrain them to an acquiescence. The power of future preservation is now in ourselves—*Et qui non servat patriam cum potest idem facit destruenti patriam*. Now is the glorious halcyon day for us to fence our posterity, as it were, within a wall of safety. Through the whole tenor of this inimitable Constitution we observe the *salus populi* is the *suprema lex*, perfectly calculated to prevent innovations of religion, the violation of our liberties, or the abrogation of our fundamental laws.

Let us, my countrymen, no longer doubt of justice, because we have great need of it. No, it is high time that we understand one another, that we be reduced to one faith and one government, otherwise there will be as great a confusion of constitutions amongst us as there was of tongues at the subversion of Babel. But here we view no denial of justice, no abridgment of our liberties; the seat of government and justice, the fountain from whose sweet influence all the inferior members receive both vigor and motion, is centered in a body whose distribution must unavoidably be free, so that each limb will receive its proper nutriment. None will be distinguished with places of trust but those who possess superior talents and accomplishments—the hero must be humane, the statesman upright. Permit me, my countrymen, to exhort you to view with an attentive eye the beauty, harmony, and order of its constituent parts, amidst their variety and yet simplicity. You ought to understand the laws by which you are governed. Here is a noble field for contemplation; here the greatest genius may employ himself with pleasure and

advantage. The experience of past times doth evince that more mischief has been introduced, more distractions in states and revolutions in government have been occasioned by the artifices of deceivers, who, under the solemn appearance of extraordinary pretenses to sanctity and virtue, have played the hypocrite so well as to impose upon the most sagacious, than by the ambition of princes or intrigues of ministers. But, my countrymen, you are now warned against the attempts and designs of the former; and, however fond we are of being thought benevolent and humane, let us with the greatest seriousness, temper, and deliberation not only discountenance their nefarious attempts in endeavoring to divert our minds from the pursuit of justice and poisoning the clear streams of our affections, but let us prefer the most pressing exigents. Physicians know that slight external wounds, if neglected, will perhaps exhaust the stock of nature and cause a dissolution of the whole man; the difference between the body politic and the body natural is only *de modo*; we vary but in ceremonies. But, my countrymen, let us with one accord exclaim: "Blasted may that tongue be that shall in the least derogate from this ever blessed, never-to-be-forgotten system of government, which, if not speedily adopted, we shall be shamed in history, cursed by posterity, the scoff of nations, and the jest of fools—affording one continual spectacle of poverty, wretchedness, and distress—nothing left us we can call our own, but our misery and our patience." Then of what shall we complain or, rather, what shall we not complain of? It will be a record wherein every man that reads will read himself a slave. No, may universal applause put it beyond the reach of censure, and may it ever be our happiness to admire it and the glory of our posterity to

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-02-03-02-0003-0007-0007> [accessed 16 Dec 2010]

Original source: Ratification by the States, Volume III: Delaware, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut