

## John Page to Thomas Jefferson, Rosewell, Va., 7 March (excerpt)

... I have long wished for a leisure Hour to write to you, but really could not command one till now; when by means of an uncommon spell of severe Weather, & a deep Snow, I am caught at Home alone, having left my Family at York, to attend on the Election of Delegates to serve in Convention in June next—I came over, offered my Services to the Freeholders in a long Address which took me an Hour & an half to deliver it, in which I explained the Principles of the Plan of the fœderal Constitution & shewed the Defects of the Confederation declaring myself a Friend to the former; & that I wished it might be adopted without losing Time in fruitless Attempts to make Amendments which might be made with more probability of Success in the Manner pointed out by the Constitution itself—I candidly confessed that I had been at first an Enemy to the Constitution proposed, & had endeavoured to fix on some Plan of Amendments; but finding that Govr. Randolph, Col. Mason, & Col. Lee differed in their Ideas of Amendments, & not one of them agreed with me in Objections, I began to suspect that our Objections were founded on wrong Principles; or that we should have agreed; & therefore I set to work; & examined over again the Plan of the Constitution; & soon found, that the Principles we had applied were such as might apply to the Government of a single State, but not to the complicated Government, of 13, perhaps 30 States which were to be *united*, so as to be *one* in Interest Strength & Glory; & yet to be severally sovereign & independent, as to their municipal Laws, & local Circumstances (except in a few Instances which might clash with the general Good); that such a general Government was necessary as could command the Means of mutual Support, more effectually than mere Confederacies Leagues & Alliances, that is, a Government which for fœderal Purposes should have all the Activity Secresy & Energy which the best regulated Governments in the World have; & yet that this, should be brought about, without establishg a Monarchy or an Aristocracy; & without violating the [just?] Principles of democratical Governments. I say I confessed, that, when I considered, that this was to be the Nature of the Government which was necessary to be adopted in the United States I found that the Objections which might be made [— — —] a single State thus governed, would not apply to this great delicate & complicated Machinery of Government, & that the Plan proposed by the Convention was perhaps the best which could be devised—I have run myself out of Breath in a long winded Sentence, & lost a deal of Time in telling you what I might as well have said in three Words,—vizt, that after all my Trouble the Freeholders left me far behind, Warner Lewis & Thos. Smith on the Lists of Candidates. I had however this Consolation, that I was not rejected on Account of my Attachment to the Constitution—for those two Gentlemen openly avowed the same Sentiments which I had declared in my Address to the People. Many of my Friends were very much mortified at the Disappointment we met with, & thought they comforted me by telling me of the extreme badness of the Weather which they said prevented many Freeholders from attending on the Election, but I comforted myself with the Reflection that I had adhered to my Resolution of treating the Freeholders like free Men; having never insulted them upon such Occasions by Solicitations & Caresses; & that they would now see clearly the Impropriety of engaging their Votes; & I comfort myself now, with the Reflection, that I shall have a little more Leisure to attend to my Affairs & to my Friends....

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