

Joshua Atherton to John Lamb , Amherst, N.H., 11, 14 June 1788

I have the Honour to recognize the Reception of your very great favour, which came to hand Yesterday.

Long anxiously desirous of the Communication proposed, I shall leave nothing unattempted in my power to effect a unanimity of Sentiment with respect to Amendments: I cannot persuade myself however, that the Method adopted by the Convention of Massachusetts is by any means eligible: To ratify, and then propose Amendments is to surrender our all, and then ask our new Masters if they will be so gracious as to return to us, some, or any part, of our most important Rights and Priveleges. Can this be acting the Part of Wisdom or good Policy?

I have the Honour, Gentlemen, perfectly to coincide with you in Sentiment, that the Amendments should be procured *previous* to the Adoption of the new System, and all local Advantages rejected as unworthy the Attention of those who are contending for the general Liberty.

There has hitherto been a fair Majority in the Convention of New Hampshire, as far as their sentiments could be collected (for the decisive Question has not yet been put) against ratifying the proposed Constitution in its present form: This the candid Consolidarians confess. But I need not inform you how many Arts are made use of to increase their Party. The presses are in a great measure secured to *their* side—inevitable Ruin is held up on non-compliance—while the new System is represented as fraught with every species of Happiness—The opponents are enemies to their Country, and they often make them say what they never thought. In the Exeter Advertiser (New Hampshire) they had the disingenuity to say, that “Mr. Atherton seemed to give up the Idea of all cases between Citizens of different States originating in the federal Courts &c.” Nothing could be more the reverse of Truth than this assertion—Their views are obvious—But I will not trouble you with particulars, some future publications, I flatter myself, will brush off the mask of Falsehood.

Permit me to hope you will lead the Way, and delineate the Method of a Correspondence between the States who have not yet resigned their Lives, Liberties, and Properties, into the hands of this new and unlimited Sovereignty: Your central Situation, and great Importance as a State, gives us a Right to expect it of you, while nothing shall be wanting, here, to second such a desirable Event; nor, indeed, shall any part of your public spirited and benevolent proposals want the attention they so highly merit.

No Amendments being yet fixed on here, or even attempted, that subject must be left for future Consideration. Could our Convention receive your Resolution not to adopt, without the necessary Amendments, before they have proceeded too far, together *with your amendments*, I have not the least Doubt but a great Majority would immediately close with your views and wishes.

The Convention of this State sits next Wednesday at Concord, by adjournment, on the conclusion of which Session, I will cause to be transmitted to the Anti-federal Committee of the County of Albany, the Result of our Deliberations, who will be good

enough to forward them to you: The Subject of Amendments shall not be forgot.

June 14th

I yesterday received the Supplement to the Albany Journal of the tenth Instant, by which it appears you will have a Majority of two to one at least against the adoption. I congratulate you on so fortunate an Event! and have the highest Confidence, that the power and opportunity thus put into your hands to save our devoted Country from impending Ruin, will be exercised with Firmness, Integrity and Wisdom.

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-03-18-02-0014>

[accessed 22 May 2012]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XVIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, No. 6