

Robert Yates to George Mason , Poughkeepsie, 21 June 1788

Your Letter of the 9th. Inst. directed to John Lamb Esquire at Newyork Chairman of the federal Republican Committee in that City enclosing your proposed Amendments to the new Constitution, has been by him transmitted to such of the Members of our Convention, who are in Sentiment with him. In consequence of this Communication a Committee has been appointed by the Members in Opposition to the New System (of which they have appointed me their Chairman) with a special View to continue our Correspondence on this necessary and important Subject.

We are happy to find that your Sentiments with respect to the Amendments correspond so nearly with ours, and that they stand on the Broad Basis of securing the Rights and equally promoting the Happiness of every Citizen in the Union. Our Convention of which his Excellency George Clinton is President commenced their Session on Tuesday last. We yeilded to a Proposal made by our Opponents to discuss the Constitution in a Committee of the whole, without putting a Question on any Part, provided that in the Course of this Discussion, we should suggest the Amendments or Explanations, which we deemed necessary to the exceptionable Parts—Fully relying on the Steadiness of our Friends, we see no Danger in this Mode and we came into it to prevent the Opposition from charging us with Precipitation.

Such has been the Spirit and Independency of the Yeomanry of this State and the Danger they apprehend from our Adoption of this Constitution, that by a Majority of at least two to one, their Sentiments at the Election are truly brought into the Representation. We have therefore the fullest Reliance that neither Sophistry Fear or Influence will effect any change in their Sentiments.

We would willingly open a Correspondence with your Convention but the doubtful Chance of your obtaining a Majority—and the Possibility that we will compleat our Determinations before we could avail ourselves of your Advice, are the Reasons that we pursue the present Mode of Correspondence.

You may rely on our fixed Determination that we shall not adopt the present Constitution without previous Amendments—We have had no Committee to draft Amendments, we therefore transmit you a Copy of those which many of us have agreed to. It is however possible upon farther Consideration that some of these may be modified or altered and others perhaps dropt.

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