

Petition Against Confirmation of the Ratification of the Constitution, January 1788

...That your petitioners are much alarmed at an instrument called a Constitution for the United States of America; framed by a Convention which had been appointed by several of the states, "solely to revise the Articles of the Confederation, and report such alterations and provisions therein as should when agreed to in Congress, And confirmed by the several states, render the Federal Constitution Adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the Union" inasmuch as the liberties, lives and property of your petitioners are not secured thereby.

That the powers therein proposed to be granted to the government of the United States are too great, and that the proposed distribution of those powers are dangerous and inimical to liberty and equality amongst the people.

That they esteem frequent elections and rotation in offices as the greatest bulwark of freedom.

That they conceive standing armies in times of peace are not only expensive but dangerous to liberty, and that a well-organized militia will be the proper security for our defense.

That the liberty of the press, that palladium of freedom, should not be insecure or in danger.

That the rights of conscience should be secured to all men, that no man should be molested for his religion, and that none should be compelled contrary to their principles and inclination to hear or support the clergy of any one religion.

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