

The Governor of Rhode Island to the President of Congress Providence, 5 April 1788

State of Rhode-Island and Providence-Plantations.
In General Assembly.

April 5th. 1788

Sir, The Report of the Convention assembled in Philadelphia, being transmitted by the Secretary of Congress, was received by us at October Session last; & 1000 Copies thereof were ordered to be printed and sent into the respective Towns within this State, that the People at large might have a full Opportunity of considering and communing upon so important an Object; which was immediately done.—And at February Session last the Consideration thereof was submitted to the Freemen of this State by the inclosed Act: And, the Returns from each respective Town being delivered in, it appears that the Yeas for adopting the Constitution for the United States were Two Hundred and Thirty seven, and the Nays Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Eight, agreeably to the within Return.

Altho this State hath been singular from her Sister States in the Mode of collecting the Sentiments of the People upon the Constitution, it was not done wth. the least Design to give any Offence to the respectable Body who composed the Convention, or a Disregard to the Recommendation of Congress, but upon pure Republican Principles, founded upon that Basis of all Governments originally deriving from the Body of the People at large.—And altho' the Majority hath been so great against adopting the Constitution, yet the People in general conceive that it may contain some necessary Articles which could well be added and adapted to the present Confederation. They are sensible that the present Powers invested with Congress are incompetent for the great national Government of the Union, and would heartily acquiesce in granting sufficient Authority to that Body to make exercise and enforce Laws throughout the States which would tend to regulate Commerce, impose Duties and Excise, whereby Congress might establish Funds for discharging the public Debt.

We regret that any Dissensions should [be?] in this State, when the Good of the Community is our Wish, and it will ever be our Disposition to endeavor to promote whatever appears to us to be of public Utility, and to harmonize as much as possible.

In Behalf of the General Assembly I have the Honor to be, with every Sentiment of Esteem, Sir Your Excellency's Most humble and Most obedient Servant