

Assembly Proceedings, 1 March 1788

Wayne Township Petition, March 1 1788

To the Honorable the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly Met.

The petition of the subscribers, freemen inhabitants of the county of Cumberland, most respectfully showeth,

That your petitioners are desirous that order and good government should prevail and that the laws and civil government should not be violated or subverted.

That as the members of your honorable body are all sworn or affirmed to do no act or thing that may be prejudicial or injurious to the constitution of this state as established by the convention [of 1776], they look up to you as the guardians of their rights and liberties therein secured to your petitioners.

That as the [state] constitution expressly declares that the people have a right to change alter or abolish their form of government when they think it will be conducive to their interest or happiness, your petitioners believe there is ample provision made for any change that may be occasioned by adopting the proposed Federal Constitution.

That as the constitution of Pennsylvania was not formed with a direct view of a federal government, the right of the people thereto could not be declared in more express terms.

That the necessity of an efficient federal government is so great as to require no proof or illustration.

That the proposed Federal Constitution cannot be very dangerous while the legislature[s] of the different states possess the power of calling a convention, appointing the delegates and instructing them in the articles they wish altered or abolished.

That your petitioners believe it is more the duty of their representatives to cooperate with the legislatures of the different states in amending the parts that may yet appear to be defective, than to endeavor to deprive them of the benefit of what is indisputably useful and necessary.

That the objections to the Federal Constitution are founded on the absurd supposition that the Representatives in Congress must have an interest different from and contrary to that of their constituents.

That as the proposed plan of government hath been approved by Congress and adopted by a Convention appointed by the citizens of this state for the express purpose of approving or condemning the same, the opposition of the legislature would in our humble opinion be a

deviation from the line of their conduct, a wanton usurpation of undelegated power and a flagrant violation of the liberty of their constituents.

That petitions requesting the intervention of the legislature can only proceed from a desire of authorizing the disorder and confusion now spreading through the state by the example of your august body. And,

That their promoters ought to be inquired after and punished, that they might be treated with that indignation and contempt justly due to the traitors of their country.

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