

New Castle County Petitions to the General Assembly, October 1787

Beginning on 24 October, eight New Castle County petitions, five supporting the Constitution and its "speedy ratification" and three advocating a cession of land for a federal capital, were presented to the General Assembly.

Only one of the eight petitions, that of the Grand Jurors of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, is dated. Because of similar texts, only three of the other seven petitions are printed below.

Petition of the Grand Jurors, 6 October

Petition of the grand jurors of the Court of Oyer and Terminer, held at New Castle, for the County of New Castle, on Friday, the fifth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven.

To the General Assembly of the Delaware State.

We the jurors aforesaid, inhabitants of the county of New Castle, deem it our duty, as citizens of this state, to adhere to the charge delivered unto us by the Honorable William Killen, Esquire, Chief Justice of our said state; and beg leave to recommend to the honorable the General Assembly of Delaware their approbation and concurrence, to ratify and confirm the present system of government adopted by the late Honorable Convention, for the purpose of forming a more perfect union, establishing justice, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty to the citizens of the United States and their posterity. In testimony whereof we have hereunto subscribed our hand, the sixth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven.

Petition of New Castle County Citizens

To the honorable the representatives of the freemen of the Delaware State, in General Assembly met,

The persons, whose names are hereunto subscribed, citizens of the County of New Castle, would humbly declare,

That they have seen with pleasure the Constitution of the United States, as framed by the late Federal Convention, and consider its establishment as conducive to the permanent security of peace, liberty, and property. They therefore take this method of expressing their fullest approbation and have most earnestly to pray that the honorable the legislature may take the speediest measures for its adoption in the Delaware State, according to the mode prescribed by the said Convention. And they, as in duty bound, shall etc.

Petition of New Castle County Inhabitants

To the honorable the representatives of the freemen of the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex in the Delaware State in General Assembly and Council met.

The petition of the subscribers inhabitants of the County of New Castle respectfully showeth:

Whereas the citizens of this state have for some time experienced great inconveniences and disadvantages, which in the opinion of your petitioners have chiefly proceeded from a want of a more efficient general government of Union. And as the late General Convention appointed to meet at Philadelphia have, with the most auspicious unanimity, agreed upon and recommended a Federal Constitution, for the excellent purposes of forming a more perfect union, establishing justice, providing for the common defense, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty to the citizens of the United States and their posterity. And have resolved, that the same be laid before the United States in Congress assembled, and afterwards submitted to a convention of delegates chosen in each state by the people thereof, under the recommendation of its legislature for their assent and ratification.

Your petitioners therefore, having had the satisfaction to hear that Congress have approved the Constitution above mentioned, most earnestly request your honorable houses to appoint a time as early as may be convenient for the election of delegates to a state convention, in order that the citizens of DELAWARE may prove their zeal for the general welfare by a speedy ratification and adoption of a plan of government, which your petitioners trust will be attended with the most desirable consequences of peace, stability, efficacy, and prosperity in all the confederate states, respect and confidence to foreign nations, and meet the applause and cordial approbation of all the true votaries of LIBERTY whatever country they inhabit.

And your petitioners as in duty bound will pray.

Petition of Delaware Freeholders and Electors

A petition of the freeholders and electors of the Delaware State to the General Assembly of the same.

Whereas in the eighth section of the first Article of the plan of federal government agreed upon by the late General Convention it is resolved: "That Congress shall exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may by cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Govern[n]ment of the United States."

Your petitioners taking into consideration the central situation, plentiful supplies of every kind of provisions, and other great conveniences which would be afforded to the seat of Congress by its establishment in Delaware, and being likewise sensible of the many advantages which would be derived to the citizens of the state in general, and moreover actuated by a federal zeal to discover an early disposition to accommodate the United States in an object of such importance.

We therefore request that your honorable houses will immediately adopt the necessary measures by such act or resolution as you in your wisdom may judge expedient, by which an offer may be made, of granting to Congress a district of the Delaware State for the purpose above mentioned, either in some particular described place, or in any part of the state which Congress may think proper to make choice of.

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