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James Madison Speech: Virginia Convention 25 June 1788

I should not have risen at all, were it not for what the Honorable Member said. If there be any suspicions, that if the ratification be made, the friends of the system will withdraw their concurrence and much more their persons, it shall never be with my approbation. Permit me to remark, that if he has given us a true state of the disposition and of the several Members of the Union, there is no doubt they will agree to the same amendments after adoption. If we propose the conditional amendments, I entreat Gentlemen to consider the distance to which they throw the ultimate settlement, and the extreme risk of perpetual disunion.—They cannot but see how easy it will be to obtain subsequent amendments. They can be proposed when the Legislatures of two-thirds of the States shall make application for that purpose, and the Legislatures of three fourths of the States, or Conventions in the same, can fix the amendments so proposed. If there be an equal zeal in every State, can there be a doubt that they will concur in reasonable amendments? If on the other hand, we call on the States to rescind what they have done, and confess that they have done wrong, and to consider the subject again, it will produce such unnecessary delays and is pregnant with such infinite dangers, that I cannot contemplate it without horror. There are uncertainty and confusion on the one hand, and order, tranquility and certainty on the other. Let us not hesitate to elect the latter alternative. Let us join with cordiality in those alterations we think proper. There is no friend to the Constitution, but who will concur in that mode.

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