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Samuel Chase to John Lamb Baltimore, Md., 13 June 1788

I returned from attending our General Court yesterday afternoon, and your letter, with one from *The federal Republicans* and several Inclosures, were delivered only a few Minutes ago.— I will have the publications reprinted. I was always averse from the Adoption of the proposed Constitution unless certain Amendments to declare & secure the Great and essential Rights of the people could be *previously* obtained, because I thought if they could not be procured before the Ratification they very probably could not be obtained afterwards, and the Conduct of the Advocates of the Government confirm my Opinion. I am convinced that the principal Characters who support the Government will not agree to any Amendments. A Declaration of Rights alone will be of no essential Service. some of the powers must be abridged or public liberty will be endangered, and in time destroyed. I have no Hopes that any attempt will be made to obtain *previous* Alterations, and I fear any attempt after Ratification will be without Effect. I consider the Constitution as radically defective in this Essential the Bulk of the people can have Nothing to say to it—The Government is not a Government of the people, it is not a Government of *Representation* the people do *not* chuse the House of Representatives, a Right of Election is declared but it can not be exercised, it is a useless nugatory Right. by no Mode of Choice by the people at large or in Districts can they chuse Representatives, the Right is immediate and given to all the people, but it is impracticable to be exercised by them. I believe a very great Majority of the people of this State are in favour of Amendments, but they are depressed and inactive, they have lost all their former Spirit, and seem ready to submit to any Master. Governor Smallwood, Mr Mercer, Mr J T Chase, our attorney General¹ and a few more are decided against the Government.—An attempt will be made to elect none but *Federalists*, as they falsly call themselves, to our next House of Delegates. a violent Opposition will be made to Me in this Town and is already begun on the avowed principle.—I am called on for this—

I beg to be remembered to all the federal Republicans with You. I will instantly communicate to Governor Smallwood.

1. John Francis Mercer, Jeremiah Townley Chase, and Attorney General Luther Martin, like Samuel Chase, voted against ratification of the Constitution in the Maryland Convention on 26 April 1788. Governor William Smallwood was not a convention delegate.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XVIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [6] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1995), 47–48, 64.