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Richard Henry Lee to John Lamb
Chantilly, Va., 27 June 1788

It is but this day I received the letter that you did me the honor to write to me on the 18th. of May last. Repeated experience having shewn me that I could not be at Richmond and be in health prevented me from attempting to be a Member of our State Convention; but I have omitted no occasion of enforcing, to the utmost of my power, the propriety of so stating Amendments as to secure their adoption, as you will see by the letter I wrote to the president of our Convention, copy of which I have the honor to enclose to you. I lament that your letter did not reach me sooner, because I think your plan of correspondence would have produced salutary consequences; as it seems to have been the idea of our Assembly when they sent the proposed plan to a Convention. Every attempt has failed, either to get previous amendments or effectually to secure the obtaining them hereafter. Yet you will see Sir that the ratifying majority feel the propriety of amendments, altho, in my judgement, the mode they have pursued for obtaining them is neither wise or manly. But, if nothing better can be obtained in the States that have not yet ratified, even this Mode of expressing the sense of the approving states, may operate to the obtaining amendments hereafter, as well as to prevent in the exercise of power, such abuses as would, in all probability, take place. It will be considered, I believe, as a most extraordinary Epoch in the history of mankind, that in a few years there should be so essential a change in the minds of men. 'Tis realy astonishing that the same people who have just emerged from a long & cruel war in defence of liberty, should now agree to fix an elective despotism upon themselves & their posterity! It is true indeed, for the honor of human nature, that this has not been a general acquiescence—In respectable States there have been formidable Minorities—In this, a majority of ten only out of near 200 Members, neither demonstrates that a majority of the people approve the plan, nor does it augur well for the prosperity of the new government—Unless the wisdom & goodness of those who first act under this System shall lead them to take effectual measures for introducing the requisite amendments. And this I hope, for the honor and safety of the U. States, will be obtained by the mediation of wise and benevolent Men. Accept my thanks Sir for the enclosures, in your letter, which I shall read with great pleasure.

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