



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > Popular Culture and Ratification > Press
Bias during Ratification > New York

Detector

New York Journal, 25 October 1787

“The LIBERTY OF THE PRESS is essential to the security of FREEDOM in a state; IT is not, therefore, to be restrained in this Commonwealth.” MASSACHUSETTS CONS[TITUTION].

MR. GREENLEAF, The truth of the above *sentence* is universally acknowledged, and *one* similar to it, has been adopted by every state in North-America—How astonishing then, is it, that the printers in this very state (Massachusetts) should REVERSE the important doctrine *of the freedom of the press!*

By looking over several late Boston papers I discovered acknowledgements of the *receipt* of pieces on the new Constitution, refusing them a place, unless “the *writers* will hand their names to the public!” adding, “AIMING THEREBY TO BE JUST!” that they will not give them place upon any other conditions!—What an astonishing kind of JUSTICE is this!—Americans have ever been taught, that JUSTICE and FREEDOM went hand in hand—but now, if we may believe the immaculate Boston printers, SLAVERY must take place of the latter—THAT THE AMERICANS MAY BE HAPPY!—It is well known, that the greatest security of an absolute government is, “the ignorance of the people.” Tremble for your dear bought FREEDOM, ye Americans, at the introduction of this first trait of slavery into your country!—The printers of a free community are an important set of men—and, when *they* league to enslave it—it will be enslaved indeed.

Oct. 24, 1787.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [1] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1981), 318.