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Cumberland County Circular Letter, 3 July 1788

East Pennsborough, Cumberland Co. 3d: July 1788

Sir[,] That ten States have already, unexpectedly, without amending ratified the Constitution proposed for the government of these united States, cannot have escaped the notice of the friends of Liberty.—That the way is prepared for the full organization of the government, with all its foreseen and consequent dangers, is too evident, and unless prudent Steps be taken to combine the friends to amendments, in some place in which they may confidently draw together and exert their power in unison, the liberty of the american Citizens must lie at the Discretion of Congress, and most probably, posterity, become Slaves to the Officers of Government.—

The means adopted and proposed by a Meeting of Delegates from the Townships of this County for preventing the alledged Evils and also the calamities of a civil War, are, as may be observed in perusing the proceedings of the said meeting herewith transmitted to request such persons as shall be judged fit within the Counties respectively, to use their influence to obtain a meeting of delegates from each Township to take into consideration, the necessity of amending the Constitution of these united States, and for that purpose to nominate and appoint a number of Delegates to represent the County, in a general conference of the Counties of this commonwealth, to be held at Harrisburg on the third day of September next, then and there, to devise such amendments, and such mode of obtaining them, as in the wisdom of the Delegates shall be judged most satisfactory and expedient.—

A Law will no doubt be soon enacted by the General Assembly for electing eight Members to represent this State in the New Congress. It will therefore be expedient to have proper persons put in nomination by the Delegates in conference, being the most likely method of directing the views of the Electors to the same Object and of obtaining the desired End.—

The Society of which you are chairman is requested to call a meeting agreeably to the foregoing design, and lay before the Delegates the proceeding of this County, to the intent that the State may unite in casting off the Yoke of Slavery and once more establish Union and Liberty—

by order of the meeting

I am, with real Esteem Sir
Your most obedt. Servt—
Benjamin Blyth Chairman

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XXXIX: Bill of Rights [3] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2023), 165–66.