Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams
New York, 5 October 1787 (excerpts)

Having long toiled with you my dear friend in the Vineyard of liberty, I do with great pleasure submit to your wisdom and patriotism, the objections that prevail in my mind against the new Constitution proposed for federal government—Which objections I did propose to Congress in form of amendments to be discussed, and that such as were approved might be forwarded to the States with the Convention system. You will have been informed by other hands why these amendments were not considered and do not appear on the Journal, and the reasons that influenced a bare *transmission* of the Convention plan, without a syllable of approbation or disapprobation on the part of Congress. I suppose my dear Sir, that the good people of the U. States in their late generous contest, contended for free government in the fullest, clearest, and strongest sense. That they had no idea of being brought under despotic rule under the notion of "Strong government," or in form of *elective despotism*: Chains being still Chains, whether made of gold or of iron. . . .

. . . But I think the new Constitution (properly amended) as it contains many good regulations, may be admitted—And why may not such indispensable amendments be proposed by the Conventions and returned With the new plan to Congress that a new general Convention may so weave them into the proffer'd system as that a Web may be produced fit for freemen to wear? If such amendments were proposed by a Capital state or two, & a willingness expressed to agree with the plan so amended; I cannot see why it may not be effected. It is a mere begging the question to suppose, as some do, that only this Moment and this Measure will do—But why so, there being no war external or internal to prevent due deliberation on this most momentous business—The public papers will inform you what violence has been practised by the Agitators of this new System in Philadelphia to drive on its immediate adoption—As if the subject of Government were a business of passion, instead of cool, sober, and intense consideration. I shall not leave this place before the 4th of November—in the mean time I shall be happy to hear from you—My best compliments are presented to Mrs. Adams, and I pray to be remembered to Gen. [James] Warren, Mr. [James] Lovell & the good Doctor [Samuel] Holten when you see him.

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