Virginia Legislature Application to Congress 20 November 1788

VIRGINIA, *to wit*:

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

FRIDAY, *the* 20*th* NOVEMBER, 1788.

RESOLVED, That an application be made, in the name and on behalf of the Legislature of this Commonwealth, to the CONGRESS of the UNITED STATES, in the words following, to wit:

"The GOOD PEOPLE of this COMMONWEALTH in CONVENTION ASSEMBLED, having ratified the Constitution submitted to their consideration, this Legislature has, in conformity to that act, and the resolutions of the UNITED STATES in Congress assembled, to them transmitted, thought proper to make the arrangements that were necessary, for carrying it into effect—Having thus shewn themselves obedient to the voice of their constituents, all America will find, that so far as it depended on them, that PLAN of GOVERNMENT will be carried into immediate operation. But the sense of the PEOPLE of VIRGINIA would be but in part complied with, and but little regarded, if we went no farther. In the very moment of adoption, and coeval with the ratification of the new plan of government, the general voice of the Convention of this state, pointed to objects, no less interesting to the people we represent, and equally intitled to our attention. At the same time that from motives of affection to our sister states, the Convention yielded their assent to the ratification, they gave the most unequivocal proofs, that they dreaded its operation under the present form. In acceding to the government under this impression, painful must have been the prospect, had they not derived consolation from a full expectation, of its imperfections being speedily amended. In this resource therefore, they placed their confidence—a confidence, that will continue to support them, whilst they have reason to believe, they have not calculated upon it in vain. In making known to you, the objections of the people of this Commonwealth, to the new plan of government, we deem it unnecessary to enter into a particular detail of its defects, which they consider as involving all the great and unalienable rights of Freemen: For their sense on this subject, we refer you to the proceedings of their late Convention, and the sense of the House of Delegates, as expressed in their resolutions of the 30th day of October, 1788. We think proper however to declare, that in our opinion, as those objections were not founded in speculative theory, but deduced from principles, which have been established, by the melancholy example of other nations in different ages—So they will never be removed, until the cause itself shall cease to exist. The sooner therefore the public apprehensions are quieted, and the government is possessed of the confidence of the people, the

more salutary will be its operations, and the longer its duration. The cause of amendments, we consider as a common cause, and since concessions have been made from political motives, which we conceive may endanger the republic; we trust that a commendable zeal will be shewn for obtaining those provisions, which experience has taught us, are necessary to secure from danger, the unalienable rights of Human Nature. The anxiety with which our Countrymen press for the accomplishment of this important end, will ill admit of delay. The slow forms of Congressional discussion and recommendation, if indeed they should ever agree to any change, would we fear be less certain of success. Happily for their wishes, the Constitution hath presented an alternative, by admitting the submission to a Convention of the states. To this therefore we resort, as the source from whence they are to derive relief from their present apprehensions. We do therefore, in behalf of our Constituents, in the most earnest and solemn manner, make this application to Congress, that a Convention be immediately called, of deputies from the several states, with full power to take into their consideration, the defects of this Constitution that have been suggested by the state Conventions, and report such amendments thereto, as they shall find best suited to promote our common interests, and secure to ourselves, and our latest posterity, the great and unalienable rights of Mankind."

Signed by Order and on Behalf of the General Assembly.

John Jones SS
Thos Mathews S.H.D

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. X: Virginia [3] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1993), 1765–66.