

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

ALL-PERFECT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

A Writer, under the signature of *Federalism*, has given the Citizens of Maryland some observations, in the last Journal, upon the adoption of the new constitution by this state, and upon the line of conduct which he thinks they ought to pursue hereafter, lest they should lose the blessing of that inestimable, and, in his opinion, all-perfect system of government.

“A Republican,” *Maryland Journal*
16 May 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MD., #114, p. 59)

AN ARISTOCRATIC, CONSOLIDATED SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

That to say the late convention was not authorised by the people at large to form an *aristocratic, consolidated* system of government for them, but merely to recommend alterations and amendments of the good old articles of confederation, is downright treason and rebellion.

“The Federalist’s Political Creed,” Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
10 May 1788 (CC 6, 5)

ARTFUL, ABSTRUSE, AND AMBITIOUS PLAN OF GOVERNMENT

Does this artful, abstruse, and ambiguous plan of government offered to you by our modern patriots, secure these inestimable blessings? No.

“Sommers,” *Pittsburgh Gazette*
15 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #532, p. 1050)

AUSPICIOUS SYSTEM OF POLITICS

From one extremity of the continent to the other, this spirit seems to be awakened to embrace the flattering opportunity, and to take the first

and fullest advantages of that auspicious system of politics, already extending its fostering hand to the agriculture, the trade and manufactures of this country. We are confident, that it will meet with a success proportioned to the importance of its object, and the force with which it acts.

Providence *United States Chronicle*
18 June 1789 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #299, p. 230)

BANEFUL SYSTEM

[Incendiaries asked] to be zealous and vigilant in their efforts to undermine and destroy the *baneful* system which has been projected.

"Wat Tyler," A Proclamation (Satire), *Pennsylvania Herald*
24 October 1787 (RCS PA., 202)

BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS EVER BEEN OFFERED TO THE WORLD

Such a man, Sir, in such a mood, would, as you do, regard the new constitution, in every point of view, with a candid and disinterested mind, and be bold to assert, "that it is the best form of government which has ever been offered to the world."

"Cincinnatus" VI (Arthur Lee): To James Wilson, *New York Journal*
6 December 1787 (CC 2, 363)

THE BEST OUR WEAK POWERS CAN FRAME

"Nay the Speculative Ideas of it, have met the same Fate, since the Republic of Plato, the Principality of Hobbes, & the Rotation of Oceana have all been Indicted & convicted of great Infirmities: so that the search for that Perfection is as vain as that for the Universal Medicine or Philosopher's Stone," and we must be content with the best our weak Powers can Frame.

Edmund Pendleton to Nathaniel Pendleton, Jr., Edmundsbury
Caroline County, Va., 10 October 1787 (CC I, 358)

THE BEST SHAPE

As far as I can judge, the sober and discreet Part of the Community approve of the Plan in its present Form, & when due Consideration is

paid to the democratic Temper of the Times, it is perhaps the best Shape in which it could have been handed forth to the People.

Phineas Bond to the Marquis of Carmarthen, Philadelphia
20 September 1787 (CC 1, 217)

BEST SYSTEM THAT CAN BE FORMED

They assert it to be the best system that can be formed, and that if we reject it, we will have a worse one or none at all, nay, that if we presume to propose alterations, we shall get into a labyrinth of difficulties from which we cannot be extricated, as no two states will agree in amendments, that therefore it would involve us in irreconcilable discord.

“Centinel” IV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 November 1787 (CC 2, 322)

A BETTER SCHEME THAN CAN BE LOOKED FOR FROM ANOTHER EXPERIMENT

It is fairly to be concluded that this is a better scheme than can be looked for from another experiment; on these considerations, I would clearly be for closing with it, and relying upon the correction of its faults, as experience may dictate the necessary alterations.

Edward Carrington to Thomas Jefferson, New York
23 October 1787 (CC 1, 440–41)

A BILL OF RIGHTS

There remains but one other view of this matter to conclude the point. The truth is, after all the declamation we have heard, that the constitution is itself in every rational sense, and to every useful purpose, A BILL OF RIGHTS.

“Publius” (Alexander Hamilton): The Federalist 84
New York, 28 May 1788 (CC 6, 131)

BOAST OF EVERY TRUE REPUBLICAN

It is sincerely hoped that he [i.e., an ailing Governor John Hancock] will soon be able to attend the convention, and in that august assembly demonstrate his approbation of that constitution lately formed by the grand federal convention—a constitution which is the boast of every TRUE Republican.

Massachusetts Gazette, 11 January 1788 (RCS MASS., 696)

A BOLD, LARGE, AND SOLID FRAME

I Read the new Proposed Constitution With an Unspeakable Eagerness and Attention—I Have Admired it, and find it is a Bold, large, and Solid frame for the Confederation.

Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Paris
1 January 1788 (CC 2, 492)

A BURTHENSOME NEWFANGLED ARISTOCRACY

If she [i.e., Virginia] cannot immediately stop the current of despotism, she may check its rapidity, and keep alive an enquiry that will increase the wisdom and establish the virtue of her own people without subjecting them to greater evils than must attend a willing subjection to a burthensome newfangled Aristocracy.

Caleb Wallace to William Fleming, Locust Groves, Ky.
3 May 1788 (CC 5, 379–80)

THE CAUSE OF DESPOTISM

A correspondent says, that the cause of despotism has met with no very brilliant success in the state of Massachusetts Bay.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
26 February 1788 (CC 4, 527)

A COMPACT

A Compact like this, which is the Result of Accommodation and Compromise, cannot be supposed to be perfectly consonant to the Wishes and Opinions of any of the Parties.

John Jay to John Adams, Office for Foreign Affairs
New York, 16 October 1787 (CC 1, 385)

A COMPACT BY IMPLICATION

The expressions are too vague, too indefinite to create such a compact by implication.

“The Impartial Examiner” I, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*
20 February 1788 (RCS VA., 393)

A COMPLICATED SYSTEM

In this new Constitution—a complicated System sets responsibility at defiance & the Rights of Men neglected & undefined are left at the mercy of events.

“Address to the Members of the New York and Virginia Conventions”
(unpublished manuscript), post–30 April 1788 (CC 5, 260)

A CONTRACT AMONG SOVEREIGN STATES

Neither of them [the Articles of Confederation or the Constitution] have a bill of rights, *nor does either* notice the liberty of the press, because they are already provided for *by the State Constitutions*; and relating only to *personal* rights, they could not be mentioned *in a contract among sovereign states*.

“An American Citizen” IV (Tench Coxe), 21 October 1787 (CC 1, 434)

CONVENTIONAL SYSTEM

The conventional system has, in my opinion, but ONE GREAT and ESSENTIAL DEFECT in its frame; and it appears to me, that this very ESSENTIAL DEFECT was overlooked from DESIGN. This defect is, that THE SACRED LIBERTY OF THE PRESS remains without any constitutional *federal* protection.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
14 December 1787 (RCS S.C., 58; CC 2, 459)

A DANGEROUS HETEROGENEOUS A FORM OF GOVERNMENT

That a state whose privileges are so guarded should so greedily destroy itself, by adopting such a dangerous heterogenous a form of government, is truly astonishing and lamentable.

“Extract of a Letter from New York,” *Connecticut Courant*
21 January 1788 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #77, pp. 104–5)

A DEEP LAID SCHEME AGAINST THE PEACE AND HAPPINESS OF AMERICA

The other State Conventions will be all opposed to it; they do not meet this long time. Would it not be advisable to recommend a general thanksgiving throughout the State, to that Providence which has thus

defeated such a deep laid scheme against the peace and happiness of America.

Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, 12 March 1788 (CC 4, 375)

DESPOTIC SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT

In this desperate situation of affairs, it need not to be wondered at, that the friends of this despotic scheme of government, were driven to the last and only alternative from which there was any probability of success; namely, the abolition of *the freedom of the Press*.

"Philadelphiensis" I (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
7 November 1787 (CC I, 575)



I shall close this essay with one observation, *viz.* that should this despotic scheme of government be overthrown, (which God grant) to what cause then are we to attribute this glorious triumph? The answer is obvious—to that palladium of liberty, that inestimable privilege of freemen, that scourge of tyranny, *the freedom of the press*.

"Philadelphiensis" II (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*
28 November 1787 (CC 2, 255)



The friends of the new constitution have used every method and device, that their power, their cunning, or their influence could have access to, in order to restrain the liberty of the press respecting that despotic scheme of government; but to their confusion be it remembered, that there were printers in Philadelphia beyond their influence or corruption.

"Philadelphiensis" VIII (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*
23 January 1788 (CC 3, 460)

DETESTABLE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY

Should my exertions in the smallest degree assist in effecting the rejection of this detestable system of slavery, I shall enjoy the highest possible gratification, that of rendering my country an essential benefit.

Luther Martin to the Citizens of the United States, Baltimore, 30 March 1788 (in a pamphlet published on 12 April 1788) (CC 5, 88)

A DIABOLICAL SCHEME OF TYRANNY AMONGST MEN

A diabolical scheme of tyranny amongst men.

“Cursory Remarks on the Federal Constitution” (Hugh Henry Brackenridge)
Pittsburgh Gazette, 1 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #475, p. 963)

EDICT

Have you considered the tendency of the 2d paragraph of the 6th article of the NEW EDICT?

“A Countryman” IV (Hugh Hughes), *New York Journal*
15 December 1787 (RCS N.Y., 426)

EXCELLENT FORM OF GOVERNMENT, GIVEN FROM HEAVEN

It is to be observed that the manners of these good people are very plain; they have no constitution, but are entirely governed by their usages—they are as perfectly ignorant of the science of government as is possible; they have been told by their leaders it is an excellent form of government, given from heaven, and they have believed it; but when they find they have been deceived, that it is a deep conspiracy (and we are told the opposition encreases daily) they will be the foremost in standing forth in defence of their liberties.

Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 21 January 1788 (CC 3, 570)

THE EXPANSION OF PRINCIPLES IN THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION

The truth is, that the great principles of the Constitution proposed by the Convention, may be considered less as absolutely new, than as the expansion of principles which are found in the articles of Confederation. The misfortune under the latter system has been, that these principles are so feeble and confined as to justify all the charges of inefficiency which have been urged against it; and to require a degree of enlargement which gives to the new system, the aspect of an entire transformation of the old.

“Publius” (James Madison): *The Federalist* 40
New York Packet, 18 January 1788 (CC 3, 406)

THE FAIREST PROMISE OF BEING FIRM AND HONORABLE

But it is a Government, unless I am greatly mistaken, that gives the fairest promise of being firm and honorable; safe from Foreign Invasion or Domestic Sedition.

Hugh Williamson, Speech at Edenton, N.C., 8 November 1787
New York *Daily Advertiser*, 27 February 1788 (CC 4, 208)

FATAL PLAN

You have been assured, that, soon as this fatal plan shall succeed, an host of rapacious collectors will *invade* the land; that they will wrest from you the hard product of your industry, turn out your children from their dwellings, perhaps commit your bodies to a jail; and your own immediate representatives will have no power to relieve you.—This is the mere phrenzy of declamation, the ridiculous conjuration of spectres and hobgoblins!

“Aristides” (Alexander Contee Hanson):
Remarks on the Proposed Plan of a Federal Government
31 January 1788 (CC 3, 545)

FOEDERAL COMPACT

I could have wished still further, that the various branches composing the foederal compact, were chosen annually. Look into the history of that great republic the Roman commonwealth, you’ll find their consuls, praetors, censors, all the curule officers were chosen annually, and a law, that no citizen, whether patrician or plebian, should be chosen a second time, till ten years had elapsed.

“An Old Soldier,” *Connecticut Gazette*
4 January 1788 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #61, p. 87)

FEDERAL FRAME

At present I confess to you we are not altogether agreed in sentiment respecting the federal frame which brings me to this town—the pamphlet you were pleasd to enclose on that subject I think is wrote in that easy familiar stile which is ever pleasing to me.

Nathaniel Barrell to George Thatcher, Boston
15 January 1788 (CC 3, 372)

A FINE SYSTEM

This constitution has a great many excellent Regulations in it and if it could be reasonably amended would be a fine System.

Richard Henry Lee to George Mason, New York
1 October 1787 (CC 1, 282)

A FORM OF FOEDERAL GOVERNMENT

We also congratulate you on the kind interposition of Divine Providence visible in that happy unanimity which obtained among the members of the late Fœderal Convention, to agree upon, and report to the States in this union, a form of Fœderal Government.

Meeting of Philadelphia Association of Baptist Churches
New York Packet, 12 October 1787 (CC 1, 375)

A FREE AND ENERGETIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

The committee in their enquiries, have been influenced by those truths and principles, which are held sacred in all free and enlightened Countries; and have inferred the proposed Amendments from what they conceive to be the fundamental principles of a free and energetic System of Government for an extensive Community

Providence *United States Chronicle*
25 March 1790 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #531, p. 367)

FREE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

A free system of government now presents itself for our acceptance: we shall be wanting to ourselves, if, instead of adopting it, we wait for the arm of tyranny to impose upon us a system of despotism.

Richard Law, Speech in the Connecticut Convention
9 January 1788 (CC 3, 317)

FUNDAMENTAL COMPACT

In the year 1788 the people of the United States make a federal constitution, which is a fundamental compact between them and their federal rulers . . . [a bill of rights should be added] as a part of this fundamental compact between the people of the United States and their federal rulers.

“Federal Farmer,” *Letters to the Republican*, 8 November 1787 (CC 2, 45, 46)

**THE GENEROUS PLAN OF POWER
DELIVERED DOWN BY THEIR RENOWNED FOREFATHERS**

I think it may be fairly said, that no *generous plan of government* for the *United States* has ever been constructed, (the plan only excepted which is under consideration) so that it seems quite unnecessary in Cato to disturb the peace of society by a bombast appeal to their feelings, on the *generous plan of power delivered down by their renowned forefathers*.

“Cæsar” II (Alexander Hamilton?), *New York Daily Advertiser*
17 October 1787 (CC I, 398)

GLORIOUS FRAME OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE U.S.

In this distressing perplexity, the glorious frame of government for the UNITED States, proposed by the late Convention, presents itself to view—the columns appear with additional lustre—their use and design are fully understood; rising from their *solid* pedestals, they receive the heaven-descended DOME, *supporting* and *supported* by the noble structure. Discord, Jealousy, and Misrule, retire!—*Peace, Liberty, and Safety*, enter!—*Justice, Honour, and Faith*, are its unfading ornaments!

Massachusetts Gazette, 7 December 1787 (CC 2, 380)

GLORIOUS MAGNA CHARTA

The names of a *Washington*, a *Franklin*, and many other illustrious characters, who subscribed their deliberate sanction to this glorious *Magna Charta*, must relieve every mind yet tottering in doubt.

“A Dispassionate Yankey” (Elkanah Watson), N.C.
Edenton Intelligencer, 1788 (RCS N.C., 57)

GLORIOUS PLAN

Our wisest sages, form'd this glorious plan,
Which is rever'd by every honest man.

“Ludlow,” Annapolis *Maryland Gazette*
5 June 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MD., #132, p. 76)

AS GOOD & PERFECT A SYSTEM

As yet Sir all I can read & reflect serves but to convince me of the high expediency of adopting the Government & that it is take it *all in all*

about as good & perfect a System as the various Interests & Prejudices & Opinions of this Continent will permit us to form.

James Kent to Nathaniel Lawrence, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
8 December 1787 (CC 2, 389–90)

A GREAT POLITICAL EXPERIMENT

The Constitution is a great political experiment—The amendments have a tendency to remove many objections which have been made to it.

Charles Jarvis, Speech in the Massachusetts Convention
4 February 1788 (RCS MASS., 1426)

THE HAPPIEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH THE SUN EVER BEHELD

Were this fatal idea [a second convention] adopted, I should bid a last adieu to that elevated hope, which now inspires me, of living under the happiest form of government which the sun ever beheld.

“Aristides” (Alexander Contee Hanson):
Remarks on the Proposed Plan of a Federal Government
31 January 1788 (CC 3, 540)

AN IMPERIUM IN IMPERIIS

Will the new system, which really comprehends an imperium in imperiis, be administered at a less expence, than we now experience? Can we create *new offices* without an accumulation of expences?

“Alfred,” Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 13 December 1787 (CC 2, 434)

AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE BEST CONSTITUTIONS THAT THE WORLD EVER SAW

Let us then consider the New Federal Constitution, as it really is, an *improvement* on the *best* constitutions that the world ever saw.

“A Citizen of America” (Noah Webster):
An Examination into the Leading Principles of the Federal Constitution
17 October 1787 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #142, p. 416)

AN IMPROVEMENT UPON THE PRESENT CONFEDERATION

Little harm or little good can the System do to me as an Individual, I am hastening out of its reach, my wishes are for posterity, yet I acknowledge the System is an "*Improvement*," upon the present Confederation, I do not see all the Bugbears in it which some of your writers have depicted, nevertheless in a work of such vast Importance, 'tis our duty to proceed with cautious & wise deliberation.

Henry Laurens to William Bell, Mepkin Plantation, S.C.
29 November 1787 (RCS S.C., 49–50; CC I, 367)

MAGNA CHARTA

I have advised several of my friends, however, to examine this Magna Charta with their own eyes, and not trust too much to the flow of rhetoric that may be expected.

Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, 17 October 1787 (CC I, 386)

MAGNA CHARTA OF AMERICAN LIBERTY

Perfection, it has been often said, is not the lot of human nature, why then must this *Magna Charta* of American liberty be supposed to come at once into the world, like Minerva out of the head of Jupiter, in every respect finished and perfect?

Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, 10 October 1787
(RCS N.Y., 78; RCS SUPPL. PA., #119, p. 288; CC I, 361)

THE MAGNA CHARTA OF THE UNION

The Constitution . . . secures and perpetuates the liberty of the people, and becomes the Magna Charta of the Union to check any encroachments of our rights.

Newport Herald, 25 October 1787 (RCS R.I., 40)

MASKED ARISTOCRACY

What then are we to think of the motives and designs of those men who are urging the implicit and immediate adoption of the proposed government; are they fearful, that if you exercise your good sense and discern-

ment, you will discover the masqued aristocracy, that they are attempting to smuggle upon you, under the suspicious garb of republicanism?

“Centinel” III (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
8 November 1787 (CC 2, 56–57)

A MIGHTY SYSTEM

Let all Columbia’s weal your views expand,
A mighty system rule a mighty land.

Newport Herald, 28 August 1788 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #203, p. 166)

A MORE PERFECT SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT

Having had painful experience of the imbecility of the confederation and its inadequacy to the purposes of government, the same patriotism which glowed in the American breast at the commencement of the revolution,—which animated the patriot in the cabinet, and supported the brave soldier in the sufferings and dangers of the field, is renewed in a Convention for devising a more perfect scheme of government.

Enos Hitchcock, Oration, Providence, R.I.
4 July 1788 (CC 6, 233)

MORE SUBSTANTIAL SUBSTITUTE FOR THE PRESENT SHADOW OF A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Congress at this time scarcely possess the means of keeping up the forms of administration; ’till the States can have time to agree upon a more substantial substitute for the present shadow of a foederal government.

“Publius” (Alexander Hamilton): The Federalist 15
New York *Independent Journal*, 1 December 1787 (CC 2, 330)

THE MOST FINISHED FORM OF GOVERNMENT THAT EVER BLESSED A NATION

Hear the mutual concessions of private interest to the general good, while they keep steadily in view the great object of their counsels, the firm CONSOLIDATION of our union—and then glory, Americans, in the singular unanimity of that illustrious assembly of patriots, in the most finished form of government that ever blessed a nation.

Simeon Baldwin, Oration, New Haven, Conn.
4 July 1788 (CC 6, 238)

MOST PERFECT SYSTEM

When I declare, that it is, in my humble opinion, the most perfect system, that ever was presented to mankind for their adoption, I barely do it justice; it is a system of government, the prototype of which is in Heaven.

Virginia Independent Chronicle, 28 November 1787 (CC 2, 242)

MOST PERFECT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

I feel myself assured, that they will very early become a part of the Constitution; and when they shall be added to the proposed plan, I shall consider it the most perfect System of government, as to the objects it embraces, that has been known amongst mankind.

Governor John Hancock, Speech to the Mass. General Court
Boston *Independent Chronicle*, 28 February 1788 (CC 4, 225)

THE MOST TYRANNIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT EVER PROJECTED

The conspirators, well aware of their advantage, have seized the favorable moment, and by the most unparalleled arts of deception, have obtained the sanction of the conventions of several states to the most tyrannic system of government ever projected.

"Centinel" XV (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
22 February 1788 (CC 4, 190)

MYSTERIOUS SYSTEM

In the first place, the press was not free till the people were generally prejudiced in favor of this mysterious system, by the artful management of its advocates.

Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 5 May 1788 (CC 5, 385)

THE NATIONAL COMPACT

We sympathize with you, in your peculiar situation with respect to the Union; and regret that your State, as well as the other sister State not in the Union, could not view the necessity of a closer and more coercive National Constitution, than that of the old Confederation, in the same light that you and we do: But we flatter ourselves, that the time hastens, when your legislative Assembly (and also the other not in the Union)

will be convinced, by the firm, virtuous, and patriotic government of our National Congress, that their political and private happiness, is inseparably involved in the National Compact.

Circular Letter of Newburyport, Mass., Merchants and Manufacturers
27 May 1789 (RCS SUPPL. R.I., #295, p. 228)

NEW COMPACT

This is handed to the people,—its contents are examined,—and, after the utmost freedom of discussion, they come forward, and peaceably join in a new compact. Not led by a blind zeal to favor a system they do not understand, but conducted by reason, they support a plan that can alone save these states from ruin.

William Pierce, Oration, Savannah, Ga.
4 July 1788 (CC 6, 252)

NEW CONFEDERACY

But their exhilaration was greatly encreased and a much keener zest given to their enjoyment; by the arrival of an Express (two hours before day) with the News that the Convention of New Hampshire had, on the 21st instant, acceded to the new Confœderacy by a majority of 11 voices, that is to say, 57 to 46.

George Washington to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Mount Vernon
28 June 1788 (CC 6, 207)

NEW CONFEDERATION

There seems at present to be a pause in the Govt of the United States—I suppose in their eager attention to the New confœderation, the old is forgotten.

Samuel A. Otis to Elbridge Gerry, New York
2 January 1788 (CC 3, 216)

A NEW AND MORE NOBLE COURSE

Happily for America, happily we trust for the whole human race, they pursued a new and more noble course.

“Publius” (James Madison): *The Federalist* 14
New York Packet, 30 November 1787 (CC 2, 317)

THE NEW ARISTOCRATIC SYSTEM

The new aristocratic system would not only remove all complaints but cure all diseases [like a quack physician].

“Sommers,” *Pittsburgh Gazette*
15 March 1788 (RCS SUPPL. PA., #532, p. 1048)

NEW CONTINENTAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The Newspapers, will show you how much the public is engaged in the discussion of the new continental form of government, which I fear will be adopted.

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, Newburyport, Mass.
23 December 1787 (CC 3, 70)

NEW EDICT

Have you considered the tendency of the 2d paragraph of the 6th article of the NEW EDICT?

“A Countryman” IV (Hugh Hughes), *New York Journal*
15 December 1787 (RCS N.Y., 426)

THE NEW EMPIRE OF GOVERNMENT

The characters which devised the new empire of government add weight to its precepts—but in no degree is this system established as it is, by the authority of *Common Sense*.

“Social Compact,” *New Haven Gazette*
4 October 1787 (CC 1, 312)

NEW FORM

However, I am told that the Opposition gains Strength daily, and Col. Platt Cooke, of Danbury, and late a Delegate to Congress is much opposed to the new Form.

Hugh Hughes to Charles Tillinghast, Dutchess County, N.Y.
28 November 1787 (CC 2, 241)



The Constitution of this Country is about to assume a new Form, and there is Reason to hope that it will gradually be made to operate in such

a manner, as to give a greater degree of Stability and efficiency to our national Govt. than it has hitherto experienced.

John Jay to Jean François Bourgoing, New York
29 August 1788 (RCS N.Y., 2464)

NEW FORM OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Without directly engaging as an advocate for this new form of national government, or as an opponent—let me conjure you to consider this a very important crisis of your safety and character.

“Cato” I (George Clinton?), *New York Journal*
27 September 1787 (CC 1, 256)



My object is to take up this new form of national government—compare it with the experience and the opinions of the most sensible and approved political authors—and to shew, that its principles, and the exercise of them, will be dangerous to your liberty and happiness.

“Cato” II (George Clinton?), *New York Journal*
11 October 1787 (CC 1, 372)

A NEW PHENOMENON

It is true, this form of federal government is almost a new phenomenon in the political world.

Nathaniel Chipman, Speech in the Vermont Convention
7 January 1791 (RCS VT., 204)

NEW PLAN

I believe, there is not a single article, wherein the *new plan* has proposed any amendment to the *old*, but what would be objected to by *Centinel*. To some he has objected, where they have made no amendment; as the power of Congress to try causes without a jury, which they have ever possessed.

“Uncus,” *Maryland Journal*, 9 November 1787 (CC 2, 79)



If they prefer the Confederation upon the old, or rather present plan, they certainly ought to keep up their representation. And if they are

zealous for the *new plan*, They ought to send their delegates to prepare the way, & I had like to have said make the paths straight before it.

Samuel A. Otis to James Warren, New York
27 November 1787 (CC 2, 235)



Some of their writers for instance, paint the distresses of every class of citizens with all the glowing language of eloquence, as if this was a demonstration of the excellence, or even the safety of the new plan, which, notwithstanding the reality of this distress, may be a system of tyranny and oppression.

“Centinel” IV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 November 1787 (CC 2, 322)



But now even those Ties are so far dissolved as to have lost their Force with so great a proportion of the People that the rest must of necessity cease to feel themselves bound by them. Wholly to reject the New Plan and attempt again to resort to the old would therefore be worse than vain.

Charles Pettit to Robert Whitehill, Philadelphia
5 June 1788 (CC 6, 154)



Indeed it appears the only remaining Chance for securing a Remnant of those invaluable Rights which are yeilded by the new Plan

Patrick Henry to John Lamb, Richmond, Va.
9 June 1788 (CC 6, 39)

NEW PLAN OF CONSOLIDATION

A FEDERALIST is a Friend to a Federal Government—An ANTI-FEDERALIST is an Enemy to a Confederation—Therefore, the Friends to the New Plan of CONSOLIDATION, are Anti-Federal, and its Opposers are firm, Federal Patriots.

Boston *American Herald*, 10 December 1787 (CC 5, 203n)

NEW PLAN OF POWER

If your defence of this new plan of power, has, as you say, been matured by four months constant meditation upon it, and is yet so very weak,

as I trust will appear, men will begin to think, that—the thing itself is indefensible.

“Cincinnatus” I (Arthur Lee), *New York Journal*
1 November 1787 (CC 1, 530)

NEW POLITICAL PHENOMENON

Are we sure this new political phenomenon will not fail? If it should fail, is there not a great probability, *that our last state will be worse than the first?*

“Alfred,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
13 December 1787 (CC 2, 434)

NEW PROJECT

A very capital defect in this new project is, that the executive and legislative powers are so blended and united, as to remove all chance for responsibility.

Richard Henry Lee to James Gordon, Jr.
Chantilly, Westmoreland County, Va.
26 February 1788 (CC 4, 212)

NEW PROPOSED GLORIOUS FRAME OF GOVERNMENT

Centinel . . . moved and seduced by the instigation of Satan, Belzebub, Lucifer, Belial, and the whole herd of Devils . . . to disturb the peace and common tranquillity of the aforesaid most illustrious United States, by dogmatical, proditorious publications, (lies and other hellish devices) to stir up and move opposition, faction, riot, sedition, insurrection, civil wars, rebellion and murder, against the aforesaid most illustrious United States, the Honorable the Congress, His Excellency General Washington, and divers others members of the honorable the continental and state conventions, and against their new proposed glorious frame of government, for promoting the peace, liberty and safety of the aforesaid most illustrious United States.

Satire, “The Arraignment of Centinel,” *Pennsylvania Mercury*
28 February 1788 (CC 4, 258–59)

NEW SCHEME

I verry Much fear this New Scheme will Not be Suitable to the Tempers, habits and various Interests of America, and yet I wish it May, for of all

National Misfortunes a fluctuating Government is productive of the Most Evils. It leaves the Human Mind at liberty to persue So Many wild Schemes of Interprize & Ambition, that every Noble Virtue and passion of the human heart is degraded and Made Subservient to them. And all friendship, Security peace and happyness vanishes of course.

Thomas Rodney to Caesar A. Rodney, Poplar Grove, Del.
10 January 1789 (RCS SUPPL. DEL., #49, p. 80)

THE NEW SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT

I am satisfyd 4/5 of our Inhabitants are opposed to the new Scheme of Gover[n]ment Indeed in the part of this Country lying south of James River I am confident 9/10 are opposed to it.

Patrick Henry to John Lamb, Richmond, Va.
9 June 1788 (CC 6, 39)

THE NEW SYSTEM

The friends of the new system are not ashamed to avow their principles, and their writings, on the subject, while its enemies take every prudent measure to prevent detection.

"A Pennsylvania Mechanic," Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
29 October 1787 (CC 1, 319)



But I have no expectation of a speedy adoption of the *New System*.

Samuel A. Otis to James Warren, New York
27 November 1787 (CC 2, 235)



The advocates for this new system hold out an idea, that you will have but little to pay, for, that the revenues will be so managed as to be almost wholly drawn from the source of trade or duties on imports, but this is delusive.

"Cato" VI (George Clinton), *New York Journal*
13 December 1787 (CC 2, 429)



I am obliged to you for the account you gave me of the Steam Boat, the Bridge, and the plan of the newly proposed Constitution. There are many excellent things in the new System.

Thomas Paine to George Clymer, Paris
29 December 1787 (CC 2, 487)



The truth is, that the great principles of the Constitution proposed by the Convention, may be considered less as absolutely new, than as the expansion of principles which are found in the articles of Confederation. The misfortune under the latter system has been, that these principles are so feeble and confined as to justify all the charges of inefficiency which have been urged against it; and to require a degree of enlargement which gives to the new system, the aspect of an entire transformation of the old.

“Publius” (James Madison): *The Federalist* 40
New York Packet, 18 January 1788 (CC 3, 406)



The new System pleased me in this which I thought the most important article.

Caleb Wallace to William Fleming, Locust Groves, Ky.
3 May 1788 (CC 5, 377)



I fancy the Time is not far distant that I shall have the Pleasure of congratulating you upon the adoption of the New System by the several States and Rde. Island not excepted—They will come into the measure as soon as they find that the several States have adopted it.

John Avery, Jr., to Nathan Dane, Boston
27 May 1788 (RCS R.I., 265)

NEW AND WONDERFUL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

From this new and wonderful system of Government, it has come to pass, that almost every national object of every kind, is at this day unprovided for.

“A Citizen of the State of New-York” (John Jay):
An Address to the People of the State of New-York
15 April 1788 (CC 5, 109)

NEW SYSTEM OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

It is, therefore, devoutly to be wished, that the several States will send to their respective Legislatures Men, who are truly attached to their Country, and who, of course, will support and maintain this New System of Federal Government, which has been framed and *recommended* to us by our most distinguished Patriots and Statesmen.

Maryland Journal, 28 September 1787 (CC I, 263–64)

THE NEW SYSTEM OF SLAVERY

Not a single newspaper that contains essays or intelligence against the new system of slavery, but what is quashed or purloined in the Post-office at New-York, while those papers which may with the strictest truth be called the vehicles of despotism, pass from place to place unmolested.

“A Correspondent,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
15 April 1788 (CC 4, 584)



And that as soon as *nine* states should accede to the new system of slavery, every one who would presume to lisp a syllable against it, ought to be taken up, imprisoned, and punished at the discretion of the judges of the supreme federal court.

“The Federalist’s Political Creed,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
10 May 1788 (CC 6, 6)

NOBLE MONUMENT OF AMERICAN PRODUCTION

It will be the province of those gentlemen who will be delegated on a future day to serve their country, to repair and beautify this noble monument of American production.

Virginia Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal, 21 May 1788 (RCS VA., 830)

THE NOBLEST SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT EVER FRAMED

And what is all this bustle about a new constitution? Have not the people one already? “Yes, replies my *authority*, but not finding if sufficiently

coercive for all the purposes of society, they are about to adopt the noblest system of government ever framed by a wise and virtuous people.”

“Solon” to “Casca,” Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*
25 April 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MD., #64, p. 37)

NOVEL SYSTEM

This novel system of government, were it possible to establish it, would be a compound of *monarchy* and *aristocracy*, the most accursed that ever the world witnessed.

“Philadelphiensis” IX (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
6 February 1788 (CC 4, 58)

NOVELTY

I must acknowledge I am much pleased to See every Rank and degree of People so Satisfyed with the Constitution but must sopose that a great part of the Joy and pleasure that the prospect of it gives the people is the Novelty, which is generally acceptable to people at first Sight.

Henry Hollingsworth to Levi Hollingsworth, Elkton, Md.
28 July 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MD., #151, p. 85)

NOVELTY IN THE POLITICAL WORLD

Hearken not to the voice which petulantly tells you that the form of government recommended for your adoption is a novelty in the political world; that it has never yet had a place in the theories of the wildest projectors; that it rashly attempts what it is impossible to accomplish.

“Publius” (James Madison): The Federalist 14
New York Packet, 30 November 1787 (CC 2, 316)

A NOVELTY IN POLITICS

The well-disposed among us however are sensible of the defects of our Political System, & we are on the eve of adopting a scheme that promises to correct them at least to a degree; at any rate we shall exhibit in the course of a few months to come, what, I believe will be a novelty in Politicks.

William Brown to William Cullen, Alexandria, Va.
19 July 1788 (CC 6, 273)

A NOVELTY IN THE PRACTICE OF LEGISLATION

The Constitution proposed in its stead is confessedly, even by the framers of it, a *NOVELTY* in the practice of legislation, essentially different, both in principles and organization, from any system of government heretofore formed, either by force, fraud, accident, or the deliberate consent of a people.

“Columbus,” *Pennsylvania Herald*
8 December 1787 (RCS PA., 314)

NUDUM PACTUM (NAKED PACT)

One of two things must happen—Either the new constitution will become a mere *nudum pactum*, and all the authority of the rulers under it be cried down, as has happened to the present confederation—Or the authority of the individual states will be totally supplanted, and they will retain the mere form without any of the powers of government.

“Brutus” VII (Melancton Smith), *New York Journal*
3 January 1788 (CC 3, 235)

ODIOUS SYSTEM OF TYRANNY

That system which was pompously displayed as the perfection of government, proves upon examination to be the most odious system of tyranny that was ever projected, a many headed hydra of despotism.

“Centinel” XII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
23 January 1788 (CC 3, 449)

ONE GRAND SYSTEM

Though no enthusiast, I cannot but impute it to a signal intervention of divine providence, that a convention from States differing in circumstances, interests, and manners, should be so harmonious in adopting one grand system.

William Samuel Johnson, Speech in the Connecticut Convention
4 January 1788 (CC 3, 249)

ONE HEAD

Thanks to Heaven, far different are our prospects; united under one head, the force of the union will soon bring an aspiring individual or overbearing state to reason and moderation.

David Ramsay, Oration, Charleston, S.C., *Columbian Herald*
5 June 1788 (CC 6, 164)

**ONE OF THE BEST MODELS OF A REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT
EVER PRESENTED TO THE SONS OF MEN**

But a candid examination of it, will most probably produce a conviction that it is one of the best models of a republican government ever presented to the sons of men.

From Henry Knox, New York, September 1787 (CC I, 279)

**ONE OF THE BEST SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT
THAT EVER WAS DEvised**

I have carefully considered the plan, and endeavored to weigh the objections which have been raised against it; and have not, as yet, been able to discover any of more weight than might be urged against the most perfect system which has yet been offered to mankind.

John Sullivan, Speech to the New Hampshire General Court
New Hampshire Mercury, 30 January 1787 (CC 2, 409)

ONE PROTECTING HEAD

Our new constitution will also make us respected abroad. What have these states to fear? What may they not hope for when united under one protecting head?

David Ramsay, Oration, Charleston, S.C., *Columbian Herald*
5 June 1788 (CC 6, 162)

THE ONLY CHARTER OF THE LAND

Columbia's grateful sons rejoice!
The Fed'ral pillars firmly stand;
By your approving people's voice,
The only charter of the land.

"A Federal Song," N.Y. *Albany Journal*, 4 August 1788 (CC 6, 321)

**THE ONLY REQUISITE MAGNA CHARTA
FOR THE CITIZENS OF AMERICA**

These clauses which I have selected, form the only requisite magna charta for the citizens of America.

"A Country Federalist," Poughkeepsie, N.Y., *Country Journal*
19 December 1787 (supplement) (RCS N.Y., 432)

OUR CHARTER

Let not a set of aspiring despots, *who make us* SLAVES and *tell us tis our* CHARTER, wrest from you those invaluable blessings, for which the most illustrious sons of America have bled and died.

“An Officer of the Late Continental Army” (William Findley?)
Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 6 November 1787 (RCS PA., 216)

PERFECT MODEL OF TYRANNY

It is a perfect model, and answers your intentions completely. It certainly is capable of carrying *tyranny* and *despotism* to their ne plus ultra, no second revolution will be necessary, no further attempt need be made on this head; for this government will answer the end proposed to all intents and purposes.

“Philadelphiensis” II (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
28 November 1787 (CC 2, 254)

PERFECT SYSTEM

[Quoting Wilson] For my part, my admiration can only be equalled by my astonishment in beholding so perfect a system formed from such heterogeneous materials.

“Cincinnatus” V (Arthur Lee): To James Wilson, Esquire
New York Journal, 29 November 1787 (CC 2, 306)

PERFECT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

I cannot but congratulate you, as well as every real friend to the interest of the United States, on the great and promising prospects which the new and, I may say, perfect system of government promises to the Federal Union.

“Social Compact,” *New Haven Gazette*
4 October 1787 (RCS CONN., 356)



A Correspondent observes, that those who advocate the New Constitution, have invariably disgraced themselves by their illiberal abuse and ill-treatment of the characters of those in the opposition, as well as for their knack at shunning every thing which may look like a fair investigation of the subject:—The only defence which has been bestowed on

this *perfect system of government*, is their frequent declarations that *it is so*, and the indiscriminate defamations of every man that shall dare to oppose it.

Worcester, Mass. *American Herald*
5 May 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MASS., #853, p. 367)

A PHENOMENON OF HUMAN WISDOM AND VIRTUE, SUCH AS THE WORLD NEVER SAW BEFORE

Considering the variety of interests to be consulted, and the diversity of human opinions upon all subjects, and especially the subject of government, it is a matter of astonishment, that the government formed by the Convention has so few faults. With these faults, it is a phenomenon of human wisdom and virtue, such as the world never saw before.

"Foederal Constitution," *Pennsylvania Gazette*
10 October 1787 (CC I, 364)

THE PLAN

The plainest principles of right and wrong, justify and ensure a most cordial reception of the plan, and I hope none will be so abandoned and lost to every principle of social compact, as to militate against it.

"Social Compact," *New Haven Gazette*
4 October 1787 (CC I, 312)



Upon the whole, although, the public mind will not be fully known, nor finally settled for a considerable time, appearances at present augur a more prompt, and general adoption of the Plan than could have been well expected.

James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, New York
24 October, 1 November 1787 (CC I, 452)

A PLAN OF ACCOMMODATION AND NECESSITY

What is it but a plan of accommodation and necessity?

"Sommers," *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 15 March 1788
(RCS SUPPL. PA., #532, p. 1049)

PLAN OF GOVERNMENT WHICH IS THE RESULT OF MORE THAN FOUR MONTHS DELIBERATION

Let us also recollect that they have appealed to the people at large to judge of the uprightness of their conduct, and have submitted to their decision that plan of government which is the result of more than four months deliberation.

“A Patriotic Citizen,” *Pennsylvania Mercury*
10 May 1788 (CC 6, 9)

PLAN OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Our State Convention after a months sitting closed the 6th Inst. and ratified the prepared Plan of National Government—I have no doubt but that it will generally obtain and I flatter myself under the Smiles of Heaven that the Establishment of it will sweep away a Number of the Plagues with which this Country is cursed.

Cotton Tufts to John Adams, Boston
28 February 1788 (RCS SUPPL. MASS., #779, p. 328)

PRESENT VISIONARY PROJECT

But if the authors of the present visionary project, can by the arts of deception, precipitation and address, obtain a majority of suffrages in the conventions of the states to try the hazardous experiment, they may then make the same inglorious boast with this insidious politician, who may perhaps be their model, that “the union of the colonies was pretty well broken, and that he hoped never to see it renewed.”

“A Columbian Patriot” (Mercy Otis Warren): *Observations on the Constitution*
Boston, February 1788 (CC 4, 282)

PRIMITIVE CONTRACT

The reason why she proposed no amendments was this—that they considered it in the light of a contract upon which no defeazance could operate; or in other words, that it was impossible when the reservation for amendments were for other bodies and a future day, that amendments would be allowable or taken notice of, as the primitive contract was only to be founded on the acceptance of the whole of the federal articles.

“A Georgia Backwoodman,” Charleston, S.C., *City Gazette*
24 May 1788 (RCS SUPPL. GA., #40, p. 34)

THE PROJECT

The project is warmly received in the Eastern States, and has become pretty generally a subject of consideration in Town-meetings and other Assemblies of the people, the usual result whereof are declarations for its adoption.

Edward Carrington to William Short, New York
25 October 1787 (CC 1, 469)

THE PROPOS'D ALTERATION

The Adoption of the foederal Constitution is certain in this State, the unwearied Endeavors of the Enemies of this plan of Government to prejudice the People against it, have met their deserved Fate here, and more Advocates for its Adoption have been made by them; the People here become more heartily Friends to the propos'd Alteration in proportion to their examining it.

Samuel Holden Parsons to Henry Knox, Middletown, Conn.
24 December 1787 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #55, p. 78)

THE PROPOSED SYSTEM OF ARBITRARY POWER

Of all the arts practised by the advocates of the proposed system of arbitrary power, that of stopping all real information, and publishing a great deal of misinformation, they have been most successful in.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 26 February 1788 (CC 4, 526)



They maintain that the *revolution* and the *declaration of independence*, however important at those periods, are now to be considered as mere farces, and that nothing that was then done ought to be any bar in the way of establishing the proposed system of arbitrary power.

"The Federalist's Political Creed," Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
10 May 1788 (CC 6, 5)

A RESORT, OR RECURRENCE, A TEST, TO TRY ALL THE ACTS OF THE ORDINARY LEGISLATURE BY

The Freeholder has lessened my objections, for the omission of a Declaration of Rights; but still I would wish Abbe Mably call them fundamental laws. I would have the instrument worded as such, and the use I would wish to see made of it, is a resort, or recurrence, a test, to try

all the Acts of the ordinary legislature by. We know the bulk of the People are not used to or would not understand abstruse, or lengthy disquisitions. These fundamental laws, might be framed with a few words, yet plain and pithy, to which the governed People would pay a similar deference as to the decalogue.

Arthur Campbell's Manuscript Draft of "Many"
Virginia Independent Chronicle, 18 June 1788 (RCS SUPPL. VA., #242, p. 88)

RIVET OF TYRANNY

All that is dear to him, nay all that constitutes life itself happy or miserable, is at this very moment about to be unalterably fixed: the rivet of tyranny may now be clenched, that will bind forever the freedom of America in the indissoluble chains of cursed slavery.

"Philadelphiensis" II (Benjamin Workman), *Philadelphia Freeman's Journal*
28 November 1787 (CC 2, 252)

SALUTARY EXPEDIENT

We have not in my humble Opinion, come a whit nearer embracing this salutary Expedient, than we were a Week ago.

Abraham Bancker to Evert Bancker, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
28 June 1788 (RCS N.Y., 1230)

SALUTARY SYSTEM

The present is a period of momentous concern.—To be a united nation of importance, or petty anarchies, is now the question. The inefficacy of our present government is fully proved by the encroachments of our commerce, the decline of national honour, and the confusion pervading every state. Thus matured in knowledge by painful experience, we are called upon to adopt a system, produced and organized by the deliberations of men, whose virtues and abilities will be an immortal honor to America. Should any state reject this salutary system, unbiassed posterity will consign its name to eternal infamy.

Pennsylvania Packet, 13 June 1788 (RCS SUPPL. DEL., #45, p. 77)

THE SCHEME

These are my general objections to the scheme: they may be erroneous; or they may be not the most important: but I confess they are such as make me anxious for the fate of my country.

John Quincy Adams to William Cranch
Newburyport, Mass., 14 October 1787 (CC 2, 224)

A SCHEME OF ARBITRARY POWER AND OFFICE-MAKING

Nothing but such a system of conduct can frustrate the machinations of an ambitious junto, who, versed in Machiavelian arts, can varnish over with the semblance of freedom the most despotic instrument of government ever projected, who cannot only veil over their own ambitious purposes, but raise an outcry against the real patriots for interested views when they are advocating the cause of liberty and of their country by opposing a scheme of arbitrary power and office-making.

“Centinel” XIII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 January 1788 (CC 3, 506–7)

SCHEME OF DESPOTISM

To such lengths have these bold conspirators carried their scheme of despotism, that your most sacred rights and privileges are surrendered at discretion.

“Philadelphiensis” IX (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
6 February 1788 (CC 4, 59)

A SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT THAT HOLDS FORTH PEACE, HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY TO OUR DISTRESSED COUNTRY

For what reason is there that the patriotic gentlemen who write in favour of a scheme of government, that holds forth *peace*, happiness and prosperity to our distressed country, should, by leaving their names with the Printers, be exposed to the malevolence of those wretches who pretend to find fault with it.

“Galba,” Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
31 October 1787 (CC 1, 319)



The hint in your paper of last Monday, that every one ought to leave his name with the printer who writes for or against the new form of government proposed by the honorable convention, is only, in my opinion, true in part; for what reason is there that the patriotic gentlemen who write in favour of a scheme of government that holds forth peace, happiness and prosperity to our distressed country, should by leaving their names with the printers, be exposed to the malevolence of those wretches who pretend to find fault with it.

“Philadelphiensis” I (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
7 November 1787 (CC 1, 575)

SCHEME OF GREAT MEN TO GRASP POWER

Believe not those who insinuate that this is a scheme of great men to grasp more power. The temptation is on the other side. Those in great offices never wish to hazard their places by such a change. This is the scheme of the people and those high and worthy characters who in obedience to the public voice offer the proposed amendment of our federal constitution thus esteemed it; or they would not have determined state Conventions as the tribunal of ultimate decision.

“A Landholder” II (Oliver Ellsworth), *Connecticut Courant*
12 November 1787 (CC 2, 94)

SCHEME OF POWER

The deputies from this state (with the exception of two) and most of those from the other states in the union, were unfortunately of this complexion, and many of them of such superior endowments, that in an *ex parte* discussion of the subject by specious glosses, they have gained the concurrence of some well-disposed men, in whom their country has great confidence, which has given a great sanction to their scheme of power.

“Centinel” III (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
8 November 1787 (CC 2, 57)



On the contrary, a short time will evince to the utter dismay and confusion of the conspirators, that a perseverance in cramming down their scheme of power upon the freemen of this state, will inevitably produce an *anarchy* destructive of their darling domination, and *may* kindle a flame prejudicial to their safety.

“Centinel” XI (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
16 January 1788 (CC 3, 388)

SCHEME OF POWER AND OFFICE MAKING

The accounts from various parts of the country correspond with my warmest hopes, and justify my early predictions of the eventual defeat of this scheme of power and office making.

“Centinel” IX (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*
8 January 1788 (CC 3, 309)

SCHEME OF THE PEOPLE

Those in great offices never wish to hazard their places by such a change. This is the scheme of the people and those high and worthy characters who in obedience to the public voice offer the proposed amendment of our federal constitution thus esteemed it; or they would not have determined state Conventions as the tribunal of ultimate decision.

"A Landholder" II (Oliver Ellsworth), *Connecticut Courant*
12 November 1787 (CC 2, 94)

A SCHEME SO WIDELY IMPORTANT

To judge by the Philadelphia Accounts, the Object of your *Labours* seems attained so far as respects the *Plan* of political Arrangement: and I shall look forward with Expectation and Desire to the happy Execution of a Scheme so widely important, and which embraces the Welfare of Multitudes.

Weeden Butler to Pierce Butler, Chelsea, England
2 September 1788 (RCS SUPPL. S.C., #90, p. 108)

A SCHEME THAT PROMISES TO CORRECT . . . DEFECTS OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM

The well-disposed among us however are sensible of the defects of our Political System, & we are on the eve of adopting a scheme that promises to correct them at least to a degree; at any rate we shall exhibit in the course of a few months to come, what, I believe will be a novelty in Politicks—the effectuating a considerable & important revolution in our Government, without bloodshed or violence of any kind, but with the deliberate consent of the People of a large number of independent Sovereignties covering a Country of 1500 Miles Extent, & differing in climate, pursuits & interests.

William Brown to William Cullen, Alexandria, Va.
19 July 1788 (CC 6, 273)

THE SCOURGE OF DESPOTIC POWER

Fellow Citizens, You have the peculiar felicity of living under the most perfect system of local government in the world; prize then this invaluable blessing as it deserves: Suffer it not to be wrested from you, and

the scourge of despotic power substituted in its place, under the specious pretence of vesting the general government of the United States with necessary power.

“Centinel” IX (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
8 January 1788 (CC 3, 308)

SO COMPOUND A SYSTEM

’Tis time only that can mature and perfect so compound a system, can liquidate the meaning of all the parts, and can adjust them to each other in a harmonious and consistent WHOLE.

“Publius” (Alexander Hamilton): The Federalist 82
New York, 28 May 1788 (CC 6, III)

SO NOBLE A PROSPECT

God grant, that in all our deliberations, we may consider America as one body, and not divert our attention from so noble a prospect, to small considerations of partial jealousy and distrust.

“Marcus” II (James Iredell), Virginia *Norfolk and Portsmouth Journal*
27 February 1788 (CC 4, 247)

SOLEMN COMPACT

And I am persuaded no man will be bold or weak enough to assert, that this solemn compact, should be so construed as to introduce and tolerate speculation and fraud.

“Candor,” *Massachusetts Gazette*, 20 November 1787 (RCS MASS., 281)



Many references, in the course of debate, having been made to the precipitancy of Georgia’s ratification, it may not be improper to remark on the observation. It ought to be considered, that the infantine situation of Georgia makes it more her interest to form a solid compact which will give health and vigor to the extremest parts of the political body than any other state.

“A Georgia Backwoodman,” Charleston, S.C., *City Gazette*
24 May 1788 (RCS SUPPL. GA., #40, p. 34)

A SPECIMEN OF THEIR DESPOTISM

[An allegorical reference to “new breeches”] Do they not already exhibit a specimen of their despotism?

“Peter Prejudice” (Francis Hopkinson): The New Breeches
Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*, 15 April 1788 (CC 5, 129)

SUCH A SYSTEM OF PERFECTION IS MORE THAN WE OUGHT TO AIM AT, AT PRESENT

Such are the sentiments of the more open and daring enemies of this country at this time—others of the same party, who possess more art, as much ignorance, but not less malice, inform you when you ask their opinion of the new constitution, either that they have not yet read it with sufficient attention—that they are not proper judges—or that it appears to them, such a system of perfection is more than we ought to aim at, at present.

“One of the People,” *Massachusetts Centinel*
17 October 1787 (CC 1, 393)

SUPREME ACT OF THE PEOPLE

We must consider this constitution when adopted as the supreme act of the people, and in construing it hereafter, we and our posterity must strictly adhere to the letter and spirit of it, and in no instance depart from them.

“Federal Farmer,” *Additional Letters to the Republican*
2 May 1788 (CC 5, 346)

SYSTEM OF AMBITION AND INIQUITY

The most specious clauses of this system of ambition and iniquity contain latent mischief, and premed[*it*]ated villainy.

“Centinel” XVI (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
26 February 1788 (CC 4, 218)

A SYSTEM COMPLETELY CALCULATED TO PROMOTE PEACE AND GOOD ORDER AMONG EVERY CLASS OF CITIZENS

It affords us peculiar satisfaction to have it in our power to congratulate our readers on the present happy prospect of a permanent establishment

of a *wise energetick* government; a system completely calculated to promote peace and good order among every class of citizens.

Springfield, Mass., *Hampshire Chronicle*, 9 July 1788 (CC 6, 254)

SYSTEM OF DESPOTISM

Indeed they seem to have been determined to monopolize the exclusive merit of the discovery, or rather as if darkness was essential to its success they precluded all communication with the people, by closing their doors; thus the well disposed members unassisted by public information and opinion, were induced by those arts that are now practising on the people, to give their sanction to this system of despotism.

“Centinel” IV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 November 1787 (CC 2, 323)



Miserable is the lot of that people whose every concern depends on the WILL and PLEASURE of their rulers. Our soldiers will become Janissaries, and our officers of government Bashaws; in short, the system of despotism will soon be compleated.

Dissent of the Minority of the Pa. Convention
Pennsylvania Packet, 18 December 1787 (CC 3, 32)



They [the Minority of the Pa. Convention] attempt to alarm you by a direful train of evils which Congress MAY do. . . . and finally complete the system of despotism by continuing themselves and their children in the government.

Alexander White, *To the Citizens of Virginia*, Winchester *Virginia Gazette*
22 February 1788 (RCS VA., 405)



And if he [Benjamin Workman] viewed it as a system of despotism, and had talents to unfold its nature and tendency, he deserves the thanks of every patriotic American, if he has exerted them under the character of Philadelphiensis.

“Centinel” XVII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
24 March 1788 (CC 4, 477)

A SYSTEM OF DOMINATION

I indulge the hope that Virginia will have spirit to oppose a System of domination though she should be the only dissenting State.

Caleb Wallace to William Fleming, Locust Groves, Ky.
3 May 1788 (CC 5, 379)

SYSTEM OF FRAUD AND OPPRESSION

Let these men but coolly consider the misery that must inevitably befall millions of their countrymen, in consequence of their treachery in framing this system of fraud and oppression; and remorse and deep anguish of soul must await them!

“Philadelphiensis” XI (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
8 March 1788 (CC 4, 363)

A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THAT WAS TO DETERMINE THE FATE OF A GREAT PEOPLE

Inebriated with a temporary superiority, they [the Maryland Convention] arrogantly refused to discuss the merits of a system of government that was to determine the fate of a great people, that would prove either the instrument of their freedom and prosperity or of their slavery and misery for ages to come.

“A Freeman,” Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
13 May 1788 (CC 6, 13)

A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THE PROTOTYPE OF WHICH IS IN HEAVEN

When I declare, that it is, in my humble opinion, the most perfect system, that ever was presented to mankind for their adoption, I barely do it justice; it is a system of government, the prototype of which is in Heaven. Had the ancient *legislator* received such a government, from his supposed *goddess*, he might, with some degree of propriety have imposed it on the world as partaking of divine descent.

Virginia Independent Chronicle, 28 November 1787 (CC 2, 242)

A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL CRUELTY UNEQUALLED IN THE ANNALS OF TIME

At the time that these men were plotting the ruin of their country, and forming a system of national cruelty unequalled in the annals of time,

the unsuspecting freemen of America were blessing them, were praying for them in their private families, and in their public churches, and looking up to them for relief.

“Philadelphiensis” X (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
20 February 1788 (CC 4, 159)

A SYSTEM OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Constitution proposed has few, if any *federal* features, but is rather a system of *national* government: Nevertheless, in many respects I think it has great merit, and by proper amendments, may be adapted to the “exigencies of government,” and preservation of liberty.

Elbridge Gerry to the Massachusetts General Court
Massachusetts Centinel, 3 November 1787 (CC 1, 549)

SYSTEM OF POLITICKS, WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY BE PRODUCTIVE OF THE HAPPIEST CONSEQUENCES TO OURSELVES AND POSTERITY

While the hostile nations of Europe are involving themselves still more and more in rapine and slaughter, and are striving which shall have the pre-eminence, the Infidel or the Christian, we, the citizens of these United States, being highly favoured by a superintending Providence, are peaceably convening, for the wise and good purpose of ratifying and confirming a system of politicks, which will eventually be productive of the happiest consequences to ourselves and posterity.

Springfield, Mass., *Hampshire Chronicle*, 9 July 1788 (CC 6, 255)

A SYSTEM OF PROCEDURE THAT THE DESPOTS MUST PURSUE

This is a system of procedure that the despots must pursue, if they have any hopes of success. Either moderation or delay would effectually defeat them.

“Philadelphiensis” VII (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
10 January 1788 (CC 3, 339)

SYSTEM OF SLAVERY

You are now called upon . . . to give this system of slavery your negative.

Luther Martin: Address No. IV, *Maryland Journal*
4 April 1788 (CC 5, 20)

A SYSTEM OF TYRANNY

Those who favor this system of tyranny are most numerous in the city of Philadelphia.

“Centinel” XVIII (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
9 April 1788 (CC 5, 58)



Some feeble attempts have been made by the advocates of this system of tyranny to answer the objections made.

“Philadelphiensis” XII (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman’s Journal*
9 April 1788 (CC 5, 61)



The Centinel, in particular, has been of infinite service in explaining the latent mischiefs of this system of tyranny.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 16 April 1788 (CC 5, 407)



Five-sixths of the people of Pennsylvania are determined not to receive a system of tyranny adopted illegally by the other *sixth*.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 17 April 1788 (CC 5, 409)

SYSTEM OF TYRANNY AND OPPRESSION

Some of their writers for instance, paint the distresses of every class of citizens with all the glowing language of eloquence, as if this was a demonstration of the excellence, or even the safety of the new plan, which, notwithstanding the reality of this distress, may be a system of tyranny and oppression.

“Centinel” IV (Samuel Bryan), Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*
30 November 1787 (CC 2, 322)

A SYSTEM PROMULGATED BY THE LATE CONVENTION, WHICH PROMISES TO ENSURE THOSE BLESSINGS

The writer of the following Remarks has the happiness and respectability of the United States much at heart—and it is with pleasure he has seen

a system promulged by the late Convention, which promises to ensure those blessings.

Strictures on the Proposed Constitution, Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*
26 September 1787 (CC 1, 244)

THEIR OWN SOLEMN ACT

Therefore, in the very commencement they prescribe this remarkable declaration—*We the People of the United States*. When the whole people of America shall be thus recognized by their own solemn act, as the people of the United States, I beseech you Sir, to tell us over whom the sovereignty, you say you leave to the several states, is to operate.

"Cincinnatus" V (Arthur Lee): To James Wilson, Esquire
New York Journal, 29 November 1787 (CC 2, 307)

A TIGHT SYSTEM INDEED

But the very last clause but one in the constitution proves clearly that the whole country is to be comprised into one large system of lordly government. A tight system indeed.

"A Federal Republican," *A Review of the Constitution*
28 November 1787 (CC 2, 269)

TYRANNICAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

I advise you, yea, I entreat you, not to change it for one that is worse: if you cannot procure a better, why, be doing with the old bad one. Except you are tired of freedom; except you are determined to entail slavery on yourselves and your posterity, for God's sake reject with that dignity becoming freemen, that tyrannical system of government, the new constitution.

"Philadelphiensis" IV (Benjamin Workman), Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*
12 December 1787 (CC 2, 418)

UNITED IN THIS NATIONAL PLAN, BECOME A THIRTEEN FOLD CORD NOT EASILY TO BE BROKEN

Though weak when separate and jarring among ourselves, yet I trust we shall when united in this national plan, become a thirteen fold cord not easily to be broken.

"Social Compact," *New Haven Gazette*
4 October 1787 (CC 1, 311)

VILLAINOUS SYSTEM OF TYRANNY

To you, my fellow-citizens I beg leave to address a few thoughts more upon that *villainous system of tyranny*, falsely called *a federal constitution*.

Spurious Luther Martin: Address No. V, Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*
10 April 1788 (CC 5, 70)

THE VISIONARY PROSPECT OF A MAGNIFICENT, YET POPULAR GOVERNMENT

The flattery of language was indeed necessary to disguise the baneful purpose, but it is like the dazzling polish bestowed upon an instrument of death; and the visionary prospect of a magnificent, yet popular government was the most specious mode of rendering the people accessory to the ruin of those systems which they have so recently and so ardently labored to establish.

John Smilie, Speech in the Pa. Convention
28 November 1787 (RCS PA., 407)

A WISE AND DESIRABLE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

We sincerely congratulate you, and the citizens of this county at large, whose representatives have ever, with the highest honour and uniformity, supported federal measures, on the prospect which the present appearance of our country presents us, of the noblest of all political events—the adoption of a wise and desirable system of government, not from servility and constraint, but from the coolness of deliberation, and the freedom of voluntary choice.

Instructions to Fairfield, Conn., Convention Delegates
New Haven Gazette, 20 December 1787 (RCS SUPPL. CONN., #52, p. 76)

THE WISEST & BEST SYSTEM UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

I believe it must be granted, by eviry dispasionate & disinterested Considerer, to be the wisest & best System under all Circumstances, that cou'd be proposed, & far better perhaps than cou'd now be formed by any Convention.

From George Plater, Sotterley, Md., 10 January 1788 (CC 3, 329)

THE WORK NEW MODELLED

The people of America . . . formed the design of a great confederacy, which it is incumbent on their successors to improve and perpetuate. If their works betray imperfections, we wonder at the fewness of them. If they erred most in the structure of the union; this was the work most difficult to be executed; this is the work which has been new modelled by the act of your Convention.

“Publius” (James Madison): The Federalist 14
New York Packet, 30 November 1787 (CC 2, 317)