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James Madison to George Washington, New York, 24 August 1788 (excerpt)

. . . The Circular letter from this State is certainly a matter of as much regret, as the unanimity with which it passed is matter of surprize. I find it is every where, and particularly in Virginia, laid hold of as the signal for united exertions in pursuit of early amendments. In Pennsylvla. the antifederal leaders are I understand, soon to have a meeting at Harrisburg, in order to concert proper arrangements on the part of that State. I begin now to accede to the opinion, which has been avowed for some time by many, that the circumstances involved in the ratification of New York will prove more injurious than a rejection would have done. The latter wd. have rather alarmed the well meaning antifederalists elsewhere, would have had no ill effect on the other party, would have excited the indignation of the neighbouring States, and would have been necessarily followed by a speedy reconsideration of the subject. I am not able to account for the concurrence of the federal part of the Convention in the circular address, on any other principle than the determination to purchase an immediate ratification in any form and at any price, rather than disappoint this City of a chance for the new Congress. This solution is sufficiently justified by the eagerness displayed on this point, and the evident disposition to risk and sacrifice every thing to it. Unfortunately the disagreeable question continues to be undecided, and is now in a state more perplexing than ever. By the last vote taken, the whole arrangement was thrown out, and the departure of Rho Island & the refusal of N. Carolina to participate further in the business, has left eleven States only to take it up anew. In this number there are not seven States for any place, and the disposition to relax, as usually happens, decreases with the progress of the contest. What and when the issue is to be is really more than I can foresee. It is truly mortifying that the outset of the new Government should be immediately preceded by such a display of locality, as portends the continuance of an evil which has dishonored the old, and gives countenance to some of the most popular arguments which have been inculcated by the Southern antifederalists. . . .

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