

Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Paris, 1 January 1788 (excerpt)

... It is Needless for me to tell You that 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—the Electionneering Principles With Respect to the Two Houses of Congress are Most Happily Calculated—I am only Affraid of two things—1er the Want of a declaration of Rights 2ly the Great Powers and Possible Continuance of the President, Who May one day or other Become a State Holder—Should My observations be well founded, I Still am Easy on two Accounts—The first that a Bill of Rights May Be Made if Wished for By the People Before they Accept the Constitution—My other Comfort is that You Cannot Refuse Being Elected President—and that if You think the Public Vessel Can Stir Without Such Powers, You Will Be able to lessen them, or Propose Measures Respecting the Permanence, Which Cannot fail to Insure a Greater Perfection in the Constitution, and a New Crop of Glory to Yourself—But in the Name of America, of Mankind at large, and Your Own fame, I Beseech You, my dear General, Not to deny Your Acceptance of the office of President for the first Years—You only Can Settle that Political Machine, and I foresee it Will furnish An Admirable Chapter in Your History....

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