

A Freeman, *Newport Herald*, 20 March 1788 (excerpts)

To the FREEHOLDERS and FREEMEN of this State.

A question of great magnitude is submitted to your decision on the fourth Monday of this month, *that of deciding in town-meeting upon the proposed Federal Constitution*—six states have already ratified it, and the others, excepting this, have appointed conventions.—This alteration of the mode of decision subjects us to great inconveniences in investigating the truth, for it cannot be expected that our information can be so extensive in separate meetings as in a collective one; besides, we are liable to be imposed on by artful and designing men, whose only prospect is in a state of anarchy, and are excluded from the benefits which frequently result from accommodations.—We are not only deprived by the Legislature *of an unalienable right*, that of determining whether we would decide ourselves on the constitution, or refer it to a convention of our appointment, where it might have a complete discussion—but insidious men have been incited to circulate falsehood after falsehood to destroy this fabric of order, justice and liberty, and flushed with their apparent success, they have presumed so far on our ignorance as to declare, that the Federal Constitution is more despotic than the British.—Let us therefore, my fellow citizens, candidly compare these two constitutions, and then we shall not hesitate to pronounce the superior excellence of the Federal Constitution;—for this purpose I have impartially selected from the celebrated Judge Blackstone, the powers of the British Government, and contrasted those of Congress under the proposed constitution with them.

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