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the Articles of Confederation by the States In Congress

New Jersey Signs, 26 November 1778

*Act of Ratification, 20 November 1778*¹

An ACT to authorize and empower the Delegates of the State of New-Jersey, in Congress, to subscribe and ratify the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the several States.

Whereas Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the States of *New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina* and *Georgia*, signed in the General Congress of the said States by the Honourable *Henry Laurens*, Esquire, their President, have been laid before the Legislature of this State to be ratified by the same, if approved: And whereas, notwithstanding the Terms of the said Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union are considered as in divers Respects unequal and disadvantageous to this State, and the Objections to several of the said Articles lately stated and sent to the General Congress aforesaid, on the Part of this State, are still viewed as just and reasonable, and sundry of them as of the most essential Moment to the Welfare and Happiness of the good People thereof, yet under the full Conviction of the present Necessity of acceding to the Confederacy proposed, and that every separate and detached State-Interest ought to be postponed to the general Good of the Union; and moreover, in firm Reliance that the Candour and Justice of the several States will, in due Time, remove, as far as possible, the Inequality which now subsists;

Sect. 1. Be it Enacted *by the Council and General Assembly of this State, and it is hereby Enacted by the Authority of the same*, That the Honourable *John Witherspoon, Abraham Clark, Nathaniel Scudder* and *Elias Boudinot*, Esquires, Delegates representing this State in the Congress of the United States, or any one or more of them be, and they hereby are authorized, empowered and directed on Behalf of this State, to subscribe and ratify the said Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union between the several States aforesaid.

2. And be it further Enacted *by the Authority aforesaid*, That the said Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union so as aforesaid subscribed and ratified, shall thenceforth become conclusive as to this State and obligatory thereon.

Passed at Trenton, November 20, 1778.

Journals of Congress, 25 November 1778

Mr. Witherspoon, a delegate for the state of New Jersey, attended and laid before Congress powers to the delegates of that state to ratify the Articles of Confederation which were read as follows:

[Text of New Jersey Act of Ratification]

Journals of Congress, 26 November 1778

In pursuance to the powers to them granted the delegates of New Jersey signed the Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union.

1. Congress's letter of 10 July 1778 urging the states which had not yet ratified the Articles of Confederation to do so as soon as possible was sent to the Assembly on 14 September by Governor William Livingston. A joint committee of the two houses, appointed on 21 September, reported four days later that it was "not expedient" to instruct the state's delegates in Congress. The same day another joint committee was appointed to draft a representation to Congress. The committee resubmitted the amendments originally adopted on 20 June 1778, with the exception of the last part of the 7th Article and the 8th and 9th articles. The Council adopted the representation, but the Assembly took no action at that session.

At the next session, on 7 November, the two houses appointed a joint committee which reported on 14 November that the state should put aside its objections and instruct its delegates to sign the Articles. Both houses adopted the report, and the act of ratification was adopted on 20 November.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. I: Constitutional Documents and Records, 1776–1787 (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1976), 128–30.