



# CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > The Confederation Period > Ratification of the Articles of Confederation by the States In Congress

## Maryland Signs, 1 March 1781

### *Act of Ratification, 2 February 1781*<sup>1</sup>

An ACT to empower the delegates of this state in congress to subscribe and ratify the articles of confederation.

Whereas it hath been said, that the common enemy is encouraged, by this state not acceding to the confederation, to hope that the union of the sister states may be dissolved, and therefore prosecutes the war in expectation of an event so disgraceful to America, and our friends and illustrious ally are impressed with an idea, that the common cause would be promoted by our formally acceding to the confederation: This general assembly, conscious that this state hath from the commencement of the war strenuously exerted herself in the common cause, and fully satisfied, that if no formal confederation was to take place, it is the fixed determination of this state to continue her exertions to the utmost, agreeable to the faith pledged in the union, from an earnest desire to conciliate the affection of the sister states, to convince all the world of our unalterable resolution to support the independence of the United States, and the alliance with His Most Christian Majesty, and to destroy for ever any apprehension of our friends or hope in our enemies of this state being again united to Great-Britain:

II. Be it enacted, *by the General Assembly of Maryland*, That the delegates of this state in congress, or any two or three of them, shall be and are hereby empowered and required, on behalf of this state, to subscribe the 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 then president, and laid before the legislature of this state to be ratified, if approved; and that the said articles of confederation and perpetual union, so as aforesaid subscribed, shall thenceforth be ratified and become conclusive as to this state, and obligatory thereon: And it is hereby declared, That by acceding to the said confederation, this state doth not relinquish, or intend to relinquish, any right or interest she hath with the other United or Confederated States to the back country, but claims the same as fully as was done by the legislature of this state in their declaration which stands entered on the journals of congress, this state relying on the justice of the several states hereafter, as to the said claim made by this state: And it is further declared, That no article in the said confederation can or ought to bind this or any other state to guarantee any exclusive claim of any particular state to the soil of the said back lands, or any such claim of jurisdiction over the said lands, or the inhabitants thereof.

*Journals of Congress, 12 February 1781*

The delegate for Maryland [Daniel Carroll] laid before Congress a certified copy of an act of the legislature of that state which was read as follows.

[Text of the Maryland Act of Ratification]

*Journals of Congress, 1 March 1781*

According to the order of the day the Honorable John Hanson and Daniel Carrol, two of the delegates for the State of Maryland, in pursuance of the act of the legislature of that state entitled: “An Act to empower the delegates of this State in Congress to subscribe and ratify the Articles of Confederation” which was read in Congress the 12 of February last and a copy thereof entered on the minutes, did in behalf of the said State of Maryland sign and ratify the said Articles, by which act the Confederation of the United States of America was completed, each and every of the Thirteen United States from New Hampshire to Georgia, both included, having adopted and confirmed and by their delegates in Congress ratified the same.

1. After 1778 the Maryland legislature refused to ratify the Articles of Confederation for the reasons given in its instructions of 22 December 1777 and 20 June 1778 to the state’s delegates in Congress. On 15 December 1778 the legislature amplified those reasons in “A Declaration” and in new instructions to its delegates in Congress.

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), 135–37.