



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > The Constitutional Convention >
Instructions to the Convention Delegates

North Carolina, 6 January 1787

Act Authorizing the Election of Delegates, 6 January 1787¹

An Act for appointing Deputies from this state, to a convention proposed to be held in the city of Philadelphia in May next, for the purpose of revising the foederal constitution.

Whereas in the formation of the foederal compact which frames the bond of union of the American states, it was not possible in the infant state of our republics to devise a system which in the course of time and experience would not manifest imperfections that it would be necessary to reform. And whereas the limited powers which by the articles of confederation are vested in the Congress of the United States, have been found far inadequate to the enlarged purposes which they were intended to produce. And whereas Congress hath by repeated and most urgent representations, endeavoured to awaken this and the other states of the union, to a sense of the truly critical and alarming situation into which they must be unavoidably cast, unless measures are forthwith taken to enlarge the powers of Congress, that they may thereby be enabled to avert the dangers which threaten our existence as a free and independent people. And whereas this state hath been ever desirous to act upon the enlarged system of the general good of the United States, without bounding its views to the narrow and selfish object of partial convenience, and has been at all times ready to make every concession to the safety and happiness of the whole, which justice and sound policy could vindicate:

I. *Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of the state of North-Carolina, and by the authority of the same,* That five Commissioners be appointed by joint ballot of both Houses of Assembly, who, or any three of them, are hereby authorised as Deputies from this state, to meet at Philadelphia on the first day of May next, then and there to meet and confer with such Deputies as may be appointed by the other states for similar purposes, and with them to discuss and decide upon the most effectual means to remove the defects of our foederal union, and to procure the enlarged purposes which it was intended to effect, and that they report such an act to the General Assembly of this state, as when agreed to by them, will effectually provide for the same.

II. *And be it further enacted,* That in case of the death or resignation of any of the said Deputies, or of their declining their appointments, his Excellency the Governor for the time being, is hereby authorised to supply such vacancies, and the Governor is required to transmit forthwith a copy of this act to the United States in Congress assembled, and to the executives of each of the states in the union.

1. After considering Virginia's act authorizing the appointment of delegates, a Senate committee, on 5 January, recommended that North Carolina send delegates to the proposed convention. On the same day, a bill for this

purpose was read and passed three times in both the Senate and the House. The House ordered the bill engrossed, and the next day it was signed into law.

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), 200–201.