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Instructions to the Convention Delegates

Massachusetts, 7–9 March 1787

House Resolution of 7 March Repealing the Resolution of 22 February 1787

Whereas on the 22d day of February 1787, it was, by the Legislature of this Commonwealth, Resolved, that five Commissioners be appointed by the General Assembly, who, or any three of whom, were empowered to meet such Commissioners as are or may be appointed by the Legislatures of the other States in the Union at Philadelphia on the second day of May next for purposes mentioned in said resolution—

Resolved, that the said resolve, & every part thereof be, & it is hereby repealed—

Resolved, that the Secretary be, & he is hereby directed not to publish or print this, or the first mentioned resolve, any resolve or order to the contrary notwithstanding—

House Substitute of 7 March for the Resolution of 22 February 1787

Whereas Congress did on the 21st day of February 1787 Resolve, “that in the opinion of Congress it is expedient that on the second monday in May next a Convention of Delegates who shall have been appointed by the several States to be held at Philadelphia, for the sole & express purpose of revising the articles of Confederation, and reporting to Congress & the several Legislatures, such alterations & provisions therein, as shall when agreed to in Congress, and confirmed by the States, render the federal Constitution adequate to the exigences of Government; & the preservation of the Union”—

And Whereas the Legislature of this Commonwealth did on the third day of this present month elect the honorable Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King, and Caleb Strong esquires, Delegates, or any three of them to attend and represent this Commonwealth at the aforesaid Convention, for the sole & express purpose mentioned in the aforesaid resolve of Congress—

Resolved that his excellency the Governour be, & he hereby is requested to grant to the said Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King & Caleb Strong esqrs a commission agreeably to said resolution of Congress

Senate Amendment to the House Substitute, 9 March 1787

And it is further Resolved, that the Said Delegates on the part of this Commonwealth be, and they are hereby instructed not to accede to any alterations or additions that may be proposed to be made in the present Articles of Confederation, which may appear to them, not to consist with the true republican Spirit and Genius of the Said Confederation: and particularly that they

by no means interfere with the fifth of the Said Articles which provides, “for the annual election of Delegates in Congress, with a power reserved to each State to recal its Delegates, or any of them within the Year & to send others in their stead for the remainder of the year—

And which also provides, that no person shall be capable of being a Delegate for more than three years in any term of six years, or being a Delegate shall be capable of holding any Office under the United States for which he or any other for his benefit, receives any salary, fees, or emolument of any kind” —

Ordered that the Secretary serve the aforementioned Delegates, severally, and such others as may hereafter be appointed in their stead with an attested copy of the last foregoing resolve—

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), 206–8.