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## Americanus II

*Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 19 December 1787

(excerpt)

. . . To alarm the people and prejudice them against a government, which, I cannot forbear thinking, has certainly received the *solemn* sanction of *Heaven*, some persons have presumed to predict the establishment of an *odious aristocracy* in the senate. To detect the futility of this prediction, let us enquire into the manner, in which this body is elected, and examine the powers, with which it is entrusted.

The *senate* is composed of two members from each state chosen by *the respective legislatures*; when assembled, they are to be divided, as equally as possible, into *three classes*. The seats of the *first class* are to be *vacated* at the expiration of the *second year*, of the *second class* at the expiration of the *fourth year*,—and of the *third class* at the expiration of the *sixth year*;—so that *one third* may be chosen *every second year*. The wisdom and prudence, which dictated this *rotation of members*, must, at first sight, forcibly strike every unprejudiced mind. The *fluctuation* of members, the *temporary duration* of their power, and the *variety of interests*, which will, invariably, *occur* in the *senate*, are so *many securities* to the public for the *faithful administration* of affairs. Is it possible, that a body, subject to the changes which every new election will produce, can form a *junto* sufficiently powerful to govern its decisions? Let us however suppose, that many members of the *senate* should be profligate enough to employ, in the prosecution of *aristocratical designs*, the sacred authority with which they are entrusted—Could they accomplish their purpose? Is it possible, that they could obtain two-thirds to consent to so dangerous a measure? Is it probable, that even one-third would be under a temptation to the same injustice, and have the same object in view? But admit, Sir, that all were actuated by the same ambitious motives—would not the power to execute be remote and circumscribed? Could a *senate*, consisting of few members and modified like ours, erect itself into a perpetual body on the *ruins of thirteen independent states*, to whom it owes its *political existence*? Could it corrupt or annihilate the *fœderal house of representatives*, a more numerous body than itself, chosen by the *unbought, unbiassed voices* of an enlightened people, and without whose concurrence it could effect no design? Could they exercise an *aristocratical power* over the different states, so distant from each other, with the same impunity, that a *numerous nobility might do over their respective vassals and dependents*? To admit suppositions of this kind is to insult the *sacred majesty* of the people, *sport* with their undertakings, and by attempting to *scare* them with *visionary dangers* to *treat them like children*. . . .

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