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Rhode Island, 11 June 1790

Introduction

On 29 May 1790 Rhode Island's Convention ratified the Constitution. Anticipating the ratification, the legislature had asked Governor Arthur Fenner to call a special session of the legislature to implement the Constitution. On 11 June the legislature adopted all twelve of Congress' amendments. On 15 June Governor Fenner wrote President Washington informing him of the state's adoption of the amendments. Fenner gave his letter and a copy of the state's ratification to Theodore Foster, his brother-in-law and one of Rhode Island's two U.S. senators. On his arrival in New York City, Foster sent Fenner's letter to the president on 26 June, who forwarded it to Congress.

Rhode Island General Assembly, Thursday, 15 October 1789

State of Rhode-Island, and Providence-Plantations.
In General Assembly, October Session, A.D. 1789.

It is Voted and Resolved, That the Secretary be directed to cause to be printed One Hundred and Fifty Copies of the Amendments to the new Constitution, as agreed to by Congress, and which have been communicated by the President of the United States to this Legislature: And that One Copy thereof be sent to each Town-Clerk in the State as soon as may be, to be laid before the Freemen at the Town-meetings to be holden on Monday next, agreeably to a former Resolve of this Assembly,¹ for their Consideration.

1. On 18 September 1789, the legislature passed an act "Directing Freemen to Instruct Their Representatives upon Calling a Convention." The meetings, held on 19 October, overwhelmingly voted against calling a state convention to consider the Constitution. No record remains of the broadside with Congress' amendments being mentioned in any of the town meetings.

House of Magistrates Proceedings, Friday, 11 June 1790

No. 4. Vote of the Lower House for Ratifying certain Articles as Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. Was Read & Concurred.

Act Ratifying Proposed Amendments, 11 June 1790

Be it Enacted by this General Assembly, and by the Authority thereof it is hereby Enacted, That the following Articles, proposed by the Congress of the United States of *America*, at their Session in *March*, A.D. 1789, to the Legislatures of the several States, for Ratification, as Amendments to the Constitution of the said United States, pursuant to the Fifth Article of the said

Constitution, be and the same are hereby fully assented to and ratified on the Part of this State, to wit:

[The twelve amendments proposed by Congress appear in the act at this point.]

It is Ordered, That his Excellency the Governor be and he is hereby requested, to transmit to the President of the said United States, under the Seal of this State, a Copy of this Act, to be communicated to the Senate, and House of Representatives, of the Congress of the said United States.

***Governor Arthur Fenner Transmitting Rhode Island's Act of Ratification, Providence, R.I.
15 June 1790***

Arthur Fenner Esquire, Governor, Captain-General, and Commander in Chief of and over the State of Rhode-Island and Providence-Plantations.

Be it known, That Henry Ward Esq. who hath under his Hand certified the annexed Paper, purporting an Act of the General Assembly of the said State, to be a true Copy is Secretary of the said State, duly elected and engaged according to Law.—Wherefore unto his Certificate of that Matter full Faith is to be rendered.

Senator Theodore Foster to President George Washington, New York, 26 June 1790

I have the Honor to inform you that his Excellency Governor Fenner of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, as I was coming from home, in order to take my Place as a Senator, in the National Legislature, sent to my Care the inclosed Copy of an Act of the Legislature of that State, passed at their Session in the present Month, intituled “An Act for ratifying certain Articles as Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America, and which were proposed by the Congress of the said States at their Session in March A.D. 1789, to the Legislatures of the Several States, pursuant to the Fifth Article of the aforesaid Constitution.”—Which is certified by the Secretary of the State, under the Seal thereof, with the Signature of the Governor who transmitted the same, by Me, to your Excellency to be communicated to the Senate and House of Representatives of the said United States agreeably to the said Act.—

I have the Honor to be very respectfully

New York Daily Gazette, 1 July 1790

A message was received from the President of the United States, communicating the ratification of the amendments proposed by Congress to the new constitution, by the state of Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations.

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