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George Benson to Theodore Foster Providence, R.I., 25 January 1788 (excerpt)

I do myself the Pleasure to acknowledge the reception of your two [obliging favours?] The Contents of which have been imparted only to a few select Friends as the Mr. Browns [Nicholas, Sr., and John], Govr. [Jabez] Bowen &c. we all Lament the Disagreeable situation in which you must feel yourselves—in Consequence of the *Base* report of a Design—that Implys a suspicion no less injurious & Disgraceful to the Convention than to yourselves—altho to the effects may in some respects be serious yet Circumstances Consider'd 'tis a very Ludicrous Idea that the Little State of R Island that is a Blank or rather a Blot in the Union should attempt to Influence the important Deliberations of the *Great Massachusetts* [I?] think it too ridiculous to make a lasting impression & suppose the Mischief will ultimately recoil on its Authors—The Federalists & the Contra-characters in this Town are at present Tortur'd with anxious suspence & Consider *all* as Depending on the result of the Massachusetts Convention—Mr. [Arthur] Fenner says he has a Letter from a Member of the Convention stating the Majority against the Constitution at 70—but we hope better Things—& Cannot forbear flattering ourselves that the Candid amongst its Opposers will finally yield to the Force of [— —] especially when enforc'd by the Matchless abilities of some of the advocates—Your friends *in our Minority* are pleas'd at your being present at the Debates as we suppose if the Issue is favorable your representations & influence in our *Upper House* will have a good Effect we are Confident your Principles will [Prompt?] the attempt¹—how long do you Conjecture the Convention will remain in being—we think the Longer the important Question is protracted the more happy it will terminate. . . .

1. A reference to the influence Foster might have in the Council in calling a state ratifying convention. On numerous occasions between November 1787 and January 1790, the Rhode Island legislature rejected motions to call a state convention.

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