Governor John Hancock to the General Court, 19 January 1790 (excerpt)

The Acts, and proceedings of Congress, which the Secretary has laid before you, contain propositions for amendments in the Constitution of the United States: These are submitted to your deliberations, on the part of our constituents; and there can be no necessity of any other call to awaken your attention, than the interest they have in them.

I shall not be particular in my remarks on these propositions.

As Government is no other than the united consent of the people of a civil community, to be governed in a particular mode, by certain established principles, the more general the union of sentiments is, the more energetick and permanent the Government will be: Upon this idea, the adoption of some of the proposed amendments becomes very important; because, the people of this Commonwealth, felt themselves assured by the proceedings of their Convention, which ratified the Constitution, that certain amendments, amongst which were some of those, would be effected: The seventh, eighth and ninth articles, appear to me to be of great consequence. In all free governments, a share in the administration of the laws ought to be vested in, or reserved to the people; this prevents a government from verging towards despotism, secures the freedom of debate, and supports that independence of sentiment, which dignifies the citizen, and renders the government permanently respectable. The institutions of grand and petit Juries are admirably calculated to produce these happy effects, and to afford security to the best rights of men in civil society: These articles therefore, I believe will meet your ready approbation: Some of the others appear to me as very important to that personal security which is so truly characteristick of a free government. . . .

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XXXVII: Bill of Rights: Origins, 500-01.