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## North Carolina Delegates to the Constitutional Convention to Governor Richard Caswell, Philadelphia, 18 September 1787 (excerpts)

In the Course of four Months' Severe and painful application and anxiety, the Convention have prepared a plan of Government for the United States of America which we hope will obviate the defects of the present Fœderal Union and procure the enlarged purposes which it was intended to effect. Inclosed we have the honor to send you a Copy, and when you are pleased to lay this plan before the General Assembly we entreat that you will do us the justice to assure that honorable body that no exertions have been wanting on our part to guard & promote the particular Interest of North Carolina. You will Observe that the representation in the Second Branch of the National Legislature is to be According to Numbers, that is to say, According to the whole Number of white Inhabitants added to three fifths of the blacks; You will also observe that during the first three years North Carolina is to have five Members in the House of Representatives, which is just one thirteenth part of the whole Number in that house and our Annual Quota of the National debt has not hitherto been fixed quite so high. Doubtless we have reasons to believe that the Citizens of North Carolina are more than a thirteenth part of the whole Number in the Union, but the State has never enabled its Delegates in Congress to prove this Opinion and hitherto they had not been Zealous to magnify the Number of their Constituents because their Quota of the National Debt must have been Augmented Accordingly, we had many things to hope from a National Government and the Chief thing we had to fear from such a Government was the Risque of unequal or heavy Taxation but we hope You will believe as we do that the Southern States in General and North Carolina in Particular are well Secured on that head by the Proposed System. It is provided in the 9th. Section of Article the first that no Capitation or other direct Tax shall be laid except in Proportion to the Number of Inhabitants, in which Number five Blacks are only Counted as three.—If a land Tax is laid we are to Pay at the Same Rate, for Example, fifty Citizens of North Carolina can be taxed no more for all their Lands than fifty Citizens in one of the eastern States. This must be greatly in our favour for as Most of their Farms are Small & many of them live in Towns, we certainly have, one with another, land of twice the Value that they Possess. When it is also considered that five Negroes are only to be charged the Same Poll Tax as three whites the advantage must be considerably increased Under the Proposed Form of Government The Southern States have also a much better Security for the

Return of Slaves who might endeavour to escape than they had under the original Confederation. . . .

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