

Letter from the Federal Convention President to the President of Congress, Transmitting
the Constitution
September 17, 1787

[HIS EXCELLENCY,
The President of Congress]

Sir: We have now the honor to submit to the consideration of the United States in
Congress assembled, that Constitution which has appeared to us the most adviseable.

The friends of our country have long seen and desired, that the power of making war,
peace and treaties, that of levying money and regulating commerce, and the
correspondent executive and judicial authorities should be fully and effectually vested in
the general government of the Union: but the impropriety of delegating such extensive
trust to one body of men is evident—Hence results the necessity of a different
organization.

It is obviously impracticable in the federal government of these States, to secure all rights
of independent sovereignty to each, and yet provide for the interest and safety of all—
Individuals entering into society, must give up a share of liberty to preserve the rest. The
magnitude of the sacrifice must depend as well on situation and circumstance, as on the
object to be obtained. It is at all times difficult to draw with precision the line between
those rights which must be surrendered, and those which may be reserved; and on the
present occasion this difficulty was encreased by a difference among the several States as
to their situation, extent, habits, and particular interests.

In all our deliberations on this subject we kept steadily in our view, that which appears to
us the greatest interest of every true American, the consolidation of our Union, in which
is involved our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence. This important
consideration, seriously and deeply impressed on our minds, led each State in the
Convention to be less rigid on points of inferior magnitude, than might have been
otherwise expected; and thus the Constitution, which we now present, is the result of a
spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession which the peculiarity of our
political situation rendered indispensable.

That it will meet the full and entire approbation of every State is not perhaps to be
expected; but each will doubtless consider, that had her interest alone been consulted, the
consequences might have been particularly disagreeable or injurious to others; that it is
liable to as few exceptions as could reasonably have been expected, we hope and believe;
that it may promote the lasting welfare of that country so dear to us all, and secure her
freedom and happiness, is our most ardent wish.

With great respect, we have the honor to be, SIR, Your EXCELLENCY'S most Obedient and
humble Servants,

GEORGE WASHINGTON, President

By unanimous Order of the CONVENTION