Dear Sir

Orange 8 April 1788

Your favor of the 5th instant was only handed to me last evening. The sentiments contained in it appear to me to be dictated by the most perfect propriety both as they regard the importance of the present moment, and the measures which it renders expedient. As I wish not to decline any cooperation with that may tend to save America from anarchy and discord. I shall cheerfully execute the task you suggest of urging on gentlemen in Maryland and South Carolina the mischief and influence here of such examples as N. Hampshire has set. I hope you will not omit the same protection as to Maryland at least. I know that the opposition there, despairing of success in a direct attack on the Constitution, mean to contend for a postponement of the question. It is extremely probable that the same policy will occur or be suggested to the opposition in S. Carolina. I will write to some of gentlemen in Kentucky also with a view to counteract efforts which I understand are in foot for turning their jealousy on the subject of the Mississippi against the proposed change in the federal system. It is obvious to me that the obstacles amount to a sacrifice of that important object will be increased at the same time that the pretence for it will be removed by an establishment of the new government, and that the event alone can promise in any short time such arrangements with Spain as Kentucky must wish for. No federal government will in my opinion be able long to accommodate an effectual solution of the right as it the hands. The chief question with Kentucky might therefore be to decide whether the present or the proposed system is most likely to obtain a positive and speedy recognition. From neither do I believe he has anything to fear. I, from the present, he cannot possibly have anything to hope. You will do well I think to correspond also with Kentucky on this subject. I hope indeed that

Col. Nicholas
that you have already done so. Your known purpose of becoming a resident
must secure you an attention that no other could expect. The necessity or
at least the nature of an address to the people from the friends of the constitution
may perhaps be best judged of, after the views of the adverse party are set
forward in the convention, and the event reduced to certainty, and I should
the precaution of
suppose it may be brought within the compass of time then attainable.

I think entirely with you on the subject of amendments.
I think the plan of Flrst is unquestionably the allusion of the federalist.
Additional amendments or a second general convention, will be fatal. The delay
only of such experiments is too serious to be hazarded. It is a fact of which
you know probably not a great number may be approved, that the late in
vention were in one stage of the business, for several days under the strongest
apprehensions of an abortive issue to their deliberations. There were moments
during this period at which despair seemed with many to predominate. I
can assure the final success to nothing but the temper with which the men
took assembled, and their ignorance of the opinions & confidence in the li-
ability of their respective constituents. The circumstances under which a con
vention composed even of wise individuals, would meet, must extinguish
any hope of an equal spirit of accommodation; and if it should happen
to contain men from the secretly aimed at discussion (and such I believe
would be found from more than one state) the game would be as easy as it
would be glorious, to insist on points popular in some parts, but known to be
admissible in others of the union. Should it happen otherwise, and an-
other plan should be agreed on, it must now be evident from a review of
the objections prevailing in the different states among the advocates for
amendments, that the opponents on their side who are attached to the union
and sensible of the necessity of a numerous government for it, would be more
dissatisfied with the result of the second than of the first experiment.
From the account I have of Mr. McDuffie’s opinions: I have no great appre
hension
reason of his falling into the scheme of preliminary alterations. I had some
time ago an opportunity of conversing pretty fully with his colleague and par-
ticular friend, Mr. Taylor, and of stating such facts and remarks as appeared
to combat that scheme. Should a convenient occasion offer, I may take the
liberty of repeating them to the Chancellor, when I write to him through in
Richmond. I shall feel no restraint from giving him similar intimations.
If report be not more than usually incorrect as to the conduct and language
of Mr. Mason, he has totally abandoned his moderation on this subject,
and is pursuing his object by means which will neither add to the dig-
uity of his character, nor I should hope, to the success of his cause. The
manner in which you account for his intemperance is. I fancy, the
true one.

Congress had come to no decision when I left N. York, on
the proposed separation of Kentucky. Nine States had been but a few
days only on the floor, and were then engaged on the subject. I waited
as long as I possibly could in hopes of seeing something done, but was
not satisfied, and I learn by subsequent information that the
Representative soon fell to seven States, which had suspended the
consideration of the subject. The opposition to the measure had not fully
shown itself when I came away. It will proceed chiefly from a couple
drawn from the peculiar state of our affairs, and from the defect of
power under the existing Confederation. There are individuals who will
throw obstacles in the way, the Vermont can be let in at the same
time. And others, I suspect, who will do the same, with the covert
view of irritating Kentucky into an opposition to the new Governor
Henry.
Being aware of the influence which the temper of Kentucky might have on the event in this State, I was anxious that Congress should at once accede to her wishes; without regarding considerations which otherwise could not be denied to have weight. I fear somewhat that Mr. Brown's anxiety to obtain a favorable point for his district, may oppose him to impressions from the difficulties I have hinted, which will not be so conspicuous to the present conjunction of things. This however is but conjecture. His judgment I have reason to believe is favorable to the new Government as it relates to the general interest of America; nor do I know that he views the matter in a different light. But I know only that pains were taken with him on his way to Congress, if not also before he set out, to prevent alarm his fears for the Irish, and prepare him for unfavorable impressions. I will think of the hint you throw out, and will endeavor to give it effect, if I can as it may be a prudent means of success.

It is not in my power to deny the last of your suggestions. I have made declarations which do not now admit of my being a candidate for the Assembly. If I have not mistaken the law a member of Congress is ineligible to a seat there; and I do not know that I could escape that character to any existing authority. But independently of these considerations, I am led to suppose that advocates for the requisite measures for settling the new machine at work may be needed as much in Congress as in this State. I do not understand that any opposition will be made here to Mr. Gordon of Mr. Burrage, both of whom are declared and the former a round fencer. The publication of which you wish a number of copies is to come out in two parts. The first is probably ready by this time. The other will be delayed a few
few weeks. I will take measures for obtaining as soon as possible the number you desire. — I have just rec'd from W. Griffin some of the late numbers which are herewith enclosed.

With great and sincere esteem I am other your Obd. Serv.

J. Madison Jr.

I said that Rhode Island has submitted the Constitution to the people to be decided by majority of voices immediately given. This result renders precludes every probability but that of a total adoption or rejection; and as the latter was foreseen, shows a determination not to involve all things in confusion. The question will be decided precisely by the same majority as have prevailed in every other instance of late; the paper money party being opposed by the other party for the Constitution.