

John Radford Sept 17, 2021

Today - 234 years ago, George Washington and the members of the Constitutional Convention, who spent a very hot summer in Philadelphia signed the completed Constitution and sent it to the various states for ratification. Included in that bundle of mail was a letter signed by General Washington. The key statement that seems to be fundamentally misunderstood today in the midst of a pandemic is: "Individuals entering into society, must give up a share of liberty to preserve the rest." He was spot on in 1784 and in 2021! Wise men's words stand strong in the most trying times.

Below is the entire letter of transmittal: It is to be read and pondered, it is why we formed into a Union and why we did not become a land of constant war and violence. The men at this convention realized strength was in unity and connection, not in preserving at all costs individual desires.

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 advisable. 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 impractical 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 circumstances, 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 increased 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 been alone 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. His Excellency the President of Congress