To the Independent Electors of the State of New-York

Date: Friday, February 27, 1801 Paper: Albany Centinel (Albany, NY) Volume: IV Issue: 70 Page: 3

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To the Independent Electors of the State of New-York.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

That period will soon arrive when you will again be called to elect a Governor for the State. The Candidates for Governor are GEORGE CLINTON and STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER. The right of Election is at all times important to Freemen; but it is peculiarly so at this period. Under this impression, it has been thought proper by the friends of the REPUBLICAN CAUSE, to submit to your serious attention—If they should appear to you unfounded you will reject them; but if they are just and reasonable, you will suffer your conduct to be influenced by them.

In a representative Government, like ours, it appears to us, that you ought to choose for your First Magistrate, the man who will administer the government best, and who unites the fairest claims to your favour. To determine this, let us briefly consider the situation of our State and Country, and the public characters of the men proposed to you as Candidates.

We live in an important era of the world: it is that which Providence has fix’d on for the most intense and critical a war witnessed. It is not between Tyrant and Tyrant, about the succession to a throne, or the limits of a Province; but it is a war of principles—a war between equal and unequal rights, between Republicanism and Monarchy, between Liberty and Tyranny. It is our boast, it is our glory, that the strife began in America, and that Liberty first triumphed in our Country. We hold, that the contest is still going on, and that although the British fleets and armies have left our shores, yet that they have left their mantle behind, and that in the bosom of our Country, there are many, very many, who have long been aiming at unequal privileges, and who have but too well succeeded. This they have done, by arrogating to themselves the right to be considered, as the only friends of the constitution, the guardians of order and religion. Those who have disagreed with them in their favorite objects, they have branded with every epithet of abuse; and there are no crimes which they have not charitably been suppos’d capable of committing. To oppose the particular plans of an administration, has been considered as hostility to government itself. And to complete the absurd tale, it has been vainly pretended, that the prosperity of our Country, and the safety enjoyed by the Farmers, have been the effects of their prudence and virtue.

But, Fellow-Citizens, you will no longer deceive yourselves; every reasonable man must see, that the good order of Freemen and the peace of the State can never be preserved by Sedition Laws and a standing Army. They are the fruits of what they call Federalism; they have been delicious to a few, but ungrateful to Republicans, and the people of America have, by their late election, proclaimed to the world that they will suffer those abuses no longer, but that they will return to Economy and the true principles of their Constitution.

In this situation of our Country and our public affairs, which of the Candidates ought you to select for your Governor? The answer is obvious, it should be the one bred in the School of Liberty; the one who has felt the evils of Tyranny and abhors them; the one who has in the most dangerous times shown himself the Friend of his Country and the bold assertor of her rights—The one hated by Tyrants in 1764, and dreaded by the sons of corruption till he should be one who has proved himself prudent in Council, and who knows the value of the earnings of industry. In the venerable CLINTON you see all these qualities combined, you see in him all that freemen can wish, or Tyrants abhor. Will you, then, Fellow-Citizens, forget his services? Will you disregard his merits, and heap your honors on enormous wealth? Forbid it Justice, forbid it Gratitude.

We have not the least inclination to detract from the pretensions of his competitor, we allow that all his friends in their addresses claim for him, and even more—we allow he has hereditary vast wealth—we allow that he has his tenants by hundreds—we allow that in the arduous business of governing the State, he will be aided by the counsels of his family and his friends. But it is yet to be proved, that of himself he possesses experience, or that fort of...
ANTI-FEDERALIST SUPPORT FOR GEORGE CLINTON (GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK), 1801

(see signers list at end of article: Middle district includes Orange County, John Hathorn among them.)