

New Jersey's Ratification

Ratification of the Constitution by the State of New Jersey, December 18, 1787. New Jersey was the third state to do so. New Jersey's ratification message included several paragraphs describing the Constitutional Convention and several more of technical legal phrasing that described when the state legislature met to discuss the ratification and when the public was warned about deliberations on the Constitution. The following text is taken from the Library of Congress's copy of Elliot's Debates.

1. Whereas a Convention of delegates from the following states, viz., — New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, — met at Philadelphia, for the purpose of deliberating on, and forming, a Constitution for the United States of America, — finished their session on the 17th day of September last, and reported to Congress the form which they had agreed upon, in the words following, viz.:

A copy of the [Constitution](#) was included in the ratification document.

2. And whereas Congress, on the 28th day of September last, unanimously did resolve, "That the said report, with the resolutions and letter accompanying the same, be transmitted to the several legislatures, in order to be submitted to a convention of delegates, chosen in each state by the people thereof, in conformity to the resolves of the Convention made and provided in that case;"

3. And whereas the legislature of this state did, on the 29th day of October last, resolve in the words following, viz., "Resolved, unanimously, That it be recommended to such of the inhabitants of this state as are entitled to vote for representatives in General Assembly, to meet in their respective counties on the fourth Tuesday in November next, at the several places fixed by law for holding the annual elections, to choose three suitable persons to serve as delegates from each county in a state Convention, for the purposes hereinbefore mentioned, and that the same be conducted agreeably to the mode, and conformably with the rules and regulations, prescribed for conducting such elections; —

4. "Resolved, unanimously, That the persons so elected to serve in state Convention, do assemble and meet together on the second Tuesday in December next, at Trenton, in the county of Hunterdon, then and there to take into consideration the aforesaid Constitution and if approved of by them, finally to ratify the same, in behalf and on the part of this state, and make report thereof to the United States in Congress assembled, in conformity with the resolutions thereto annexed.

5. "Resolved, That the sheriffs of the respective counties of this state shall be, and they are hereby, required to give as timely notice as may be, by advertisements, to the people of their counties, of the time, place, and purpose of holding elections, as aforesaid."

6. And whereas the legislature of this state did also, on the 1st day of November last, make and pass the following act, viz., "An Act to authorize the people of this state to meet in convention, deliberate upon, agree to, and ratify, the Constitution of the United States proposed by the late General Convention, — Be it enacted by the Council and General Assembly of this state, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that it shall and may be lawful for the people thereof, by their delegates, to meet in Convention to deliberate upon, and, if approved of by them, to ratify, the Constitution for the United States proposed by the General Convention held at Philadelphia, and every act, matter, and clause, therein contained, conformedly to the resolutions of the legislature passed the 29th day of October, 1787, — any law, usage, or custom, to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding;"

7. Now be it known, that we, the delegates of the state of New Jersey, chosen by the people thereof, for the purpose aforesaid, having maturely deliberated on and considered the aforesaid proposed Constitution, do hereby, for and on the behalf of the people of the said state of New Jersey, agree to, ratify, and confirm, the same and every part thereof.

8. Done in Convention, by the unanimous consent of the members present, this 18th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1787, and of the independence of the United States of America the twelfth.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto subscribed our names.

JOHN STEVENS, President,
and delegate from the county of Hunterdon.

County of Cape May,
Jesse Hand,
Jeremiah Eldridge,
Matthew Willdin.

Hunterdon,
David Brearly,
Joshua Corshon.

Morris,
William Windes,
William Woodhull,
John Jacob Faesch.

Cumberland,
David Potter,
Jonathan Bowen,
Eli Elmer.

Sussex,
Robert Ogden,

Thomas Anderson,
Robert Hoops.

Bergen,
John Fell,
Peter Zobriskie,
Cornelius Hennion.

Essex,
John Chetwood,
Samuel Hay,
David Crane.

Middlesex,
John Neilson,
John Beatty,
Benjamin Manning.

Monmouth,
Elisha Lawrence,
Samuel Breese,
William Crawford.

Somerset,
John Witherspoon,
Jacob R. Hardenberg,
Frederick Frelinghuysen.

Burlington,
Thomas Reynolds,
Geo. Anderson,
Joshua M. Wallace.

Gloucester,
Richard Howell,
Andrew Hunter,
Benjamin Whitall.

Salem,
Whitten Cripps,
Edmund Wetherby.

Attest. Samuel W. Stockton, Secretary