

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, May 20, 1784, from  
Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence,  
Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt,  
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson**

Annapolis May 20. 1784.

Dear Sir

I have recd. Mr. Hopkinson's letter enclosing from the office of finance a bill containing 506  $\frac{2}{3}$  dolrs which I will negotiate agreeably to your desire, pay the Intendant the sum you owe him & transmit the balance. The committee, of which I am a member, appointed to view the country around Georgetown under the Princeton engagement set out this morning upon that business. I think with you that it will be proper to effect this business before the adjournment & no time may better be spar'd than the present. For four or 5 days past the qualification of the Delegates from R.I. hath been the only subject before us. The motion respecting them was from Mr. Read. This brought forward the report of the committee which was agnst them & conformable to the principles establish'd in the case of Delaware. Upon the question shall the resolution stand? 4 States voted in the affirmative, 2 in the negative & 3 were divided. Of course it was enter'd in the journals that it was lost. The question then was, are they under this vote delegates? On the side of those in the negative the arguments are-if 7 states were on the floor represented generally by but two members & the question was, shall a delegation retain its seat, or any particular member, the time of service having actually expir'd, the vote of one member only wod. keep him in Congress. 2. that the question is not, shall they be turn'd out? It is not an ordinary legislative act, but a judicial one & the confederation the law & to be applied to the case in

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question, it is a question of right. Does it or not exist-if it does what number of States are necessary to confirm it. That in all judicial decisions the majority of the commission. That here it is more essentially necessary, that the majority

of the U.S. in Congress assembled are competent only to the inferior duties of gov't.:that 9 states are necessary to the most important acts: that a scrupulous attention to the object & principles of the confederation wou'd. perhaps require that the number necessary to govern the States shou'd. concur in the opinion of the validity of their respective credentials, but that neither the policy of the confederation nor any principle of gov'ts will admit that the consent of less than 7 States shall be necessary, that in this case there is not only a minority of the U.S. in Congress assembled in their favor but a minority of those present. On the other side, it was argued 1. that having their seats 7 States are necessary to turn them out, that the power of excluding delegations from their character & office shou'd not be committed to a less number: that if the question was shall a delegation be admitted under indisputable credentials from his State, the number present being as before stated, & only one member voted ag'nst it, it wou'd. be negativ'd, that this wou'd be a dangerous engine in the hands of party men, that the resolution of the committee ag'nst them was negativ'd & of course they remain members. I submit to you the reasons on both sides as they occur to me at present but perhaps I do not recollect the whole, for being just ready to mount our horses I have not time to be so particular as I cou'd. Wish. Give me yr opinion upon this affr. I have negotiated the affr. of the bill, pd. the Intendant 7 £, 10s & inclose you the balance except three doll'rs wh. he gave me in money & wh. I retain not being able to send it. I inclose you a cypher which I hope

you will be able to read, but upon examining it I find it incomplete & must therefore leave it with Mr. Clerici to be finish'd & sent by post. The gentlemen wait for me & have only time to add that I am yr. affecte. Friend & servt. Jas. Monroe

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