

Thomas Jefferson to Governors, March 21, 1807, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

CIRCULAR LETTER TO THE GOVERNORS OF KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE, OHIO, AND MISSISSIPPI J. MSS.

Washington, March 21, 1807.

Sir, —Altho the present state of things on the Western side of the Mississippi does not threaten any immediate collision with our neighbors in that quarter, and it is our wish they should remain undisturbed until an amicable adjustment may take place; yet as this does not depend on ourselves alone, it has been thought prudent to be prepared to meet any movements which may occur. The law of a former session of Congress, for keeping a body of 100,000 militia in readiness for service at a moment's warning, is still in force. But by an act of the last session, a copy of which I now enclose, the Executive is authorized to accept the services of such volunteers as shall offer themselves on the conditions of the act, which may render a resort to the former act unnecessary. It is for the execution of this act that I am now to solicit your zealous endeavors. The persons who shall engage will not be called from their homes until some aggression, committed or intended, shall render it necessary. When called into action, it will not be for a lounging, but for an active, & perhaps distant, service. I know the effect of this consideration in kindling that ardour which prevails for this service, & I count on it for filling up the numbers requisite without delay. To yourself, I am sure, it must be as desirable as it is to me, to transfer this service from the great mass of our militia to that portion of them, to whose habits and enterprise active & distant service is most congenial. In using, therefore, your best exertions towards

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accomplishing the object of this act, you will render to your constituents, as well as to the nation, a most acceptable service.

With respect to the organizing and officering those who shall be engaged within your State, the act itself will be your guide; and as it is desirable that we should be kept informed of the progress in this business, I must pray you to report the same from time to time to the Secretary at War, who will correspond with you on all the details arising out of it.

I salute you with great consideration and respect.