



Argus

Providence United States Chronicle, 8 November 1787¹

Rehoboth, November 1, 1787.

Mr. WHEELER, The Liberty of the Press, or the Liberty which *every Person* in the United States *at present* enjoys, of exhibiting his Sentiments on all public Measures to his Fellow-Citizens, through the Medium of the News-Papers, is a Privilege of infinite Importance—a Privilege, for which (among others) we have fought and bled, and for which I would again shoulder my Musket. I confess the Attempt lately made in Boston, by some of our aristocratical Gentry, to have every Person's Name published who should write against the proposed Federal Constitution, has given many of us a just Alarm.² Why, if the proposed Constitution is a good one are its Supporters afraid to have any Thing said against it? Why are they for hurrying it down our Throats, before we have opened our Mouths? For what Purpose is it that the Names of its Opposers should be published? Why all this extraordinary Exertion? If it is *very good, very just, and wisely calculated* to make us respectable and happy, no Doubt it will be adopted—But pray, my good Friends, give us a Chance to read it once or twice over before we say whether we like it or not. I had written thus far, and intended to have gone on to state my Opinion on this important Subject, when my Son brought me in Mr. Powars' last Boston Paper—I laid down my Pen to read it, and I found a Piece, signed JOHN DE WITT,³ on the Subject I had proposed to write; who the Author is I know not, but his Sentiments so exactly coincide with mine, that I concluded to write no more, at present, but to request you, Mr. Printer, to publish that Piece in your next Chronicle: By so doing you'll oblige at least one of your Readers.

¹ For a response to "Argus," see *United States Chronicle*, 15 November (below).

² On 10 October Federalist printer Benjamin Russell of the *Massachusetts Centinel* informed his readers that he had refused to print an Antifederalist piece by "Lucius" until the author identified himself so that his name could be made public if anyone [52] requested it. Russell declared that he would not print Antifederalist pieces unless "the writers leave . . . their names to be made publick if desired" (CC:131–C). Russell's policy caused an immediate uproar. (See CC:131 A–N.)

³ "John De Witt" II was printed by Edward Eveleth Powars in his Boston *American Herald* on 29 October (RCS:Mass., 156–61), and was reprinted in the *United States Chronicle* on 8 November, in the same issue as "Argus."

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