

22. *For Washington's Second Term*

To Washington

*Philadelphia, July 30, 1792*

Sir:

I received the most sincere pleasure at finding in our late conversation, that there was some relaxation in the disposition you had before discovered to decline a re-election. Since your departure, I have left no opportunity of sounding the opinions of persons, whose opinions were worth knowing on these two points. 1st. The effect of your declining, upon the public affairs, and upon your own reputation. 2dly. The effect of your continuing, in reference to the declarations you have made of your disinclination to public life; and I can truly say that I have not found the least difference of sentiment on either point. The impression is uniform, that your declining would be to be deplored as the greatest evil that could befall the country at the present juncture, and as critically hazardous to your own reputation; that your continuance will be justified in the mind of every friend to his country, by the evident necessity for it. 'T is clear, says every one with whom I have conversed, that the affairs of the national government are not yet firmly established—that its enemies, gen-

erally speaking, are as inveterate as ever—that their enmity has been sharpened by its success, and by all the resentments which flow from disappointed predictions and mortified vanity—that a general and strenuous effort is making in every State to place the administration of it in the hands of its enemies, as if they were its safest guardians—that the period of the next House of Representatives is likely to prove the crisis of its permanent character—that if you continue in office nothing materially mischievous is to be apprehended, if you quit, much is to be dreaded—that the same motives which induced you to accept or originally ought to decide you to continue till matters have assumed a more determined aspect—that indeed it would have been better, as it regards your own character, that you had never consented to come forward, than now to leave the business unfinished and in danger of being undone—that in the event of storms arising, there would be an imputation either of want of foresight or want of firmness—and, in fine, that on public and personal accounts, on patriotic and prudential considerations, the clear path to be pursued by you will be, again to obey the voice of your country, which, it is not doubted, will be as earnest and as unanimous as ever. . . .

I trust, sir, and I pray God, that you will determine to make a further sacrifice of your tranquillity and happiness to the public good. I trust that it need not continue above a year or two more; and I think that it will be more eligible to retire from office before the expiration of a term of election, than to decline a re-election. . . .