

SCR

32

Senator Vic Fischer

Alaska State Legislature
Pouch V • Juneau, Alaska 99811 • (907) 465-4954



M

February 10, 1986

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Senator Mitch Abood, Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee

From: Senator Vic Fischer *Vic*

Re: SCR 32 - U.S. Constitution Bicentennial

Attached is background material relating to this resolution. The impetus comes from some of my conservative, New Right friends, but I'm sure the intent is to be broad in terms of the spectrum of and participation in this enterprise.

This is a marvelous idea, and I do hope the resolution can be moved along soon.

Thanks.

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U.S. Constitution Bicentennial

Events to be marked in 1986 and 1987

1986

January 16

Adoption of Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. Later it became model for the First Amendment.

January 21

Virginia invites separate states to a commercial conference in Annapolis, Maryland, to revise the Articles of Confederation. James Madison is author of the idea.

February 28

Great Britain indicates it will not honor 1783 Peace Treaty of Paris, that calls for a withdrawal of its troops from the Great Lakes, until debts by former American colonists are settled.

June to September

A major economic depression reaches its deepest point throughout thirteen states.

August 7

Congress agrees to the proposal for revising the Articles of Confederation.

August 31

Armed insurgents prevent the Massachusetts Court from sitting.

September 5

First of a series of violent outbursts over farmers' debts being collected by the courts.

The State Supreme Court sitting in Worcester, Massachusetts is broken up by armed insurgents.

September 11-14

Annapolis Convention. Five states attend, debate revisions of the Articles of Confederation, set May 1787 for a constitutional convention to be held in Philadelphia.

September 26

Armed insurgents, five hundred strong, in Springfield, Massachusetts, force the state's Supreme Court to adjourn over the debt issue.

December

Shays Rebellion is climax of other violence in the year over court-collected debts.

1987

January 25

Shays' rebels attack and seize the Federal Arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts.

February 4

Shays Rebellion is crushed and his followers scattered.

February 21

Congress adopts resolution calling on states to meet in Philadelphia, May 14, for a Constitutional Convention.

February to May

Delegates are named to the Constitutional Convention.

May 14

Convention delayed with only two state delegations present.

May 25

Convention finally opens with the necessary quorum of seven states present.

May 29

Virginia Plan drawn up by James Madison goes beyond revising the Articles of Confederation and proposes drafting a new document.

June 15

New Jersey submits a nine-point plan to protect smaller states, stressing retention of the Articles of Confederation.

July 5

New York delegation quits the Convention, protesting the historic meeting was going beyond revising the Articles of Confederation. Alexander Hamilton remains as the lone delegate from New York.

July 13

Northwest Ordinance adopted while Convention meets. Act lays groundwork

for political organization of settlements beyond thirteen original states.

July 16

Connecticut's compromise is submitted. Votes in the Senate would be based on equality with one vote for each state, and House votes based on population.

July 24

Convention's Committee of Detail begins work on framing specifics of the document.

August 6

Great Debate on particulars of the Constitution begins over terms of office and powers of Congress to regulate foreign and interstate commerce.

September 17

Final approval of the U.S. Constitution is given and it is signed.

September 19

New Constitution is published for the first time in Philadelphia papers.

September 26 and 28

Calls are heard from dissident Convention delegates to censure Congress for going beyond revision of the Articles of Confederation.

September 28

Congress calls for the states to convene conventions of ratification and sends draft of the document to the separate thirteen state capitals.

October 27

First of the Federalist Papers, authored by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, is published.

December 7

Delaware becomes the first state to ratify, unanimously, the new Constitution.

December 12

Pennsylvania ratifies the document, 46 to 23.

December 18

New Jersey, by unanimous vote, is the third state to ratify the Constitution.

We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

January 28, 1986

Hon. Vic Fischer
Alaska State Senate
Pouch Y
Juneau, Ak. 99811

Dear ~~Senator Fischer~~ ^{Vic.},

A number of us citizens, anticipating the two hundredth anniversary of the American Constitution next year, think we should take the opportunity to celebrate our freedom and to reflect on the frame of government that makes it possible. The Constitution is often cited, less often read, and too often taken for granted by citizens who owe their place in a free government to its wise dispositions.

The State of Alaska exists because of the success of the American government under the Constitution in expanding the horizons of freedom toward the west. The Constitution of our State is based on the American Constitution and shares the same spirit. It seems fitting for our State to observe this bicentenary as an opportunity to rekindle and deepen the appreciation that our citizens share for the American Constitution.

This anniversary offers us a splendid opportunity to examine and strengthen the foundations of our democratic republic by encouraging public discussion and observance of the Constitution in our cities and villages, in our schools and universities. The education in the principles of free government which close attention to the American Constitution affords would have a salutary effect on public deliberations in Alaska.

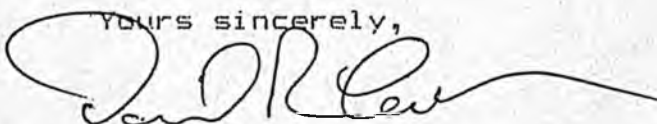
We offer the resolution enclosed and would be very pleased if you were willing to co-sponsor it. The resolution proposes that a commission be named, whose membership might consist of about fifteen Alaskans, one-third to be appointed by each of the three great departments of government--the Legislature, the Executive, and the Supreme Court. Similar commissions have already been formed by many States; and there is also a national commission to observe the anniversary.

The Board of Directors of the Polaris Institute, on which one of us sits, voted unanimously last weekend to make observance of this anniversary its chief project for the coming year, and the Institute has plans for a number of activities in keeping with the occasion. (The Institute is a nonprofit, non-partisan educational foundation incorporated under the laws of the State of Alaska.) A number of programs to celebrate the anniversary are now underway in Alaska, sponsored by the Alaska Humanities Forum, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Department of Political Sci-

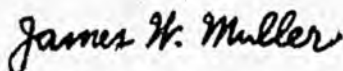
ence at the University of Alaska, Anchorage; but we believe it appropriate for the State of Alaska to take its part as well.

We would be very pleased to talk to you about this proposal and about how the commission might operate. Your support for this idea would help to guarantee that our own respect for constitutional government is passed on to the next generation of Alaskans.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daniel R. Cowden". The signature is fluid and extends to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

Daniel R. Cowden
1408B Walrus Cir.
Eagle River, Ak. 99577

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James W. Muller". The signature is more compact and rounded than the one above.

James W. Muller
470 E. 56th Ave., Apt. B
Anchorage, Ak. 99518

encl.

Joint Resolution

Whereas: The Constitution, of the United States, which Gladstone called "the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man," is the oldest written frame of government that has been in continuous use by a free people on earth; and

Whereas: Government under the Constitution in America has provided an example of self-government that has inspired a yearning for freedom all over the world; and

Whereas: The bicentenary of the Constitution is in the year of our era nineteen hundred eighty-seven and of the independence of the United States two hundred eleven; and

Whereas: The State of Alaska proudly takes its place among the Union of States under the Constitution; now therefore

Be it resolved: That the State of Alaska shall appoint a Commission to commemorate the bicentenary of the Constitution of the United States of America; and

That the year 1987 shall be proclaimed the Year of the Constitution of the United States of America, to be commemorated by appropriate public observances for citizens throughout the State of Alaska.

Senator Vic Fischer

Alaska State Legislature
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February 5, 1986

To: Tamara Cook, Director
Legislative Legal Services

From: Senator Vic Fischer

Re: Drafting request/Constitution bicentenary

I would like a resolution drafted, reflecting my sponsorship, regarding the bicentenary of the U.S. Constitution, modeled after the attached.
I would like a draft back as soon as possible in order to meet the February 14 deadline for filing personal bills.

Please contact Ginger Baim at 4954, should you have any questions or need additional information.

February 5, 1986

WHEREAS the Constitution of the United States is the oldest written frame of government that has been in continuous use by a free people on earth; and

WHEREAS government under the Constitution in America has provided an example of self-government that has inspired a yearning for freedom all over the world; and

WHEREAS the bicentenary of the Constitution is in 1987 which is also the 211th year on independence of the United States; and

WHEREAS the State of Alaska proudly takes its place among the Union of States under the Constitution; and

WHEREAS in anticipation of the two hundredth anniversary of the American Constitution, we should take the opportunity to celebrate our freedom and to reflect on the frame of government that makes it possible; and

WHEREAS the Constitution is often cited, less often read, and too often taken for granted by citizens who owe their place in a free government to its wise dispositions; and

WHEREAS this anniversary offers us a splendid opportunity to examine and strengthen the foundations of our democratic republic by encouraging public discussion and observance of the Constitution in our cities and villages, in our schools and universities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State legislature requests the Governor of the State of Alaska to appoint a Commission to commemorate the bicentenary of the Constitution of the United States of America; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the year 1987 shall be proclaimed the Year of the Constitution of the United States of America, to be commemorated by appropriate public observances for citizens throughout the State of Alaska.