

Founders Online

[\[Back to normal view\]](#)

JAMES MADISON TO DANIEL WEBSTER, 27 MAY 1830

DEAR SIR

MONTPR. May 27. 1830

I recd. by the mail of yesterday, your favor of the 24th. accompanied by a copy of your late Speech, for which I return my thanks. I had before recd. more than one Copy from other sources; and had read the Speech with a full sense of its powerful bearing on the subjects discussed, and particularly its overwhelming effect on the nullifying doctrine of S. Carolina. Altho I have not concealed my opinions of that doctrine, and, of the use made of the proceedings of Virga.* in 1798-99, I have been unwilling to make a public exhibition of them, as well from the consideration that it might appear obtrusive, as that it might enlist me, as a newspaper Polemic, and lay me under an obligation to correct errors in other cases, in which I was concerned, or by, my silence admit that they were not errors. I had however been led by a letter from a distinguished Champion of the new doctrine, to explain my views of the subject somewhat at large, and in an answer, afterwards to a letter from Mr. Everett, to enclose a copy of them. For a particular reason assigned to Mr. E. I asked the favor of him not to regard it as for public use. Taking for granted that you are in friendship with him, I beg leave to refer you to that communication, as an Economy for my pen. The reference will remove the scruple he might otherwise feel, in submitting it to your perusal.

The actual System of Govt. for the U.S. is so unexampled in its origin, so complex in its structure, and so peculiar in some of its features, that in describing it the political vocabulary does not furnish terms sufficiently distinctive & appropriate, without a detailed resort to the facts of the case. With that aid I endeavored to sketch the System, which I understand to constitute the people of the Several States one people for certain purposes, with a Government competent to the effectuation of them.

Mrs. M. joins in the acknowledgts. & sincere return of your friendly recollections, with the addition of the respects & good wishes, wch. we pray may be tendered to Mrs. Webster.

J. M

*turn over

*Neither the term nullifying nor nullification is in the Resolutions of Virginia; nor is either of them in the Resolutions of Kentucky in 1798 drawn by Mr. Jefferson. The Resolutions of that State in 1799 in which the word Nullification appears, were not drawn by him, as is shewn by the last paragraph of his letter to W. C. Nicholas. see Vol. 3 of his Correspondence. p. 429

Draft (DLC).

SOURCE PROJECT	Madison Papers
TITLE	James Madison to Daniel Webster, 27 May 1830
AUTHOR	Madison, James
RECIPIENT	Webster, Daniel
DATE	27 May 1830
CITE AS	"James Madison to Daniel Webster, 27 May 1830," <i>Founders Online</i> , National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/99-02-02-2054 . [This is an Early Access document from The Papers of James Madison. It is not an authoritative final version.]

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is part of the National Archives. Through its grants program, the NHPRC supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, relating to the history of the United States, and research and development projects to bring historical records to the public.
