

Feb. 24, 1861

33

S  
Abraham Lincoln

Sunday evening Feb 24 1861.

My dear Sir

I have suggested many changes, of little importance severally but in their general effect tending to soothe the public mind -

Of course the concessions are, as they ought to be if they are to be of avail, at the cost of the winning the triumphant party. I do not fear their displeasure, they will be loyal whatever is said, not so the defeated irritated angry frenzied party.

I, my dear Sir, have devoted myself singly to the study of the case - here, with advantages of access and free communication with all parties of all sections, I have a common responsible



ity and interest with you - and I shall  
adhere to you faithfully in every case.  
You must therefore allow me to speak  
freely and candidly. In this spirit.

I declare to you my conviction that  
the second and third paragraphs  
even if modified as I propose in  
my amendments, will give such ad-  
vantages to the Democrats that Virgin-  
ia and Maryland will secede and  
we shall within ninety, perhaps within  
sixty days be obliged to fight <sup>the South</sup> for this  
capital with a divided North  
for our reliance - and we shall not  
have one loyal magistrate or military  
officer South of the Potomac. In that  
case the dismemberment of the Republic  
would date from the inauguration of  
a Republican Administration.



I therefore must respectfully com-  
mend the omission of these paragraphs.

I know the tenacity of party friends,  
and I honor and respect it. But I  
know also that they know nothing of  
the real peril of this crisis - It has  
not been their duty to study it as it  
has been mine. Only the soothing  
words which I have spoken have  
saved us and carried us along thus  
far - Every loyal man - and indeed  
I think every disloyal man in the  
South will tell you this.

Your case is quite like to that of Jefferson.  
He brought the first Republican party  
into power against and over a party ready  
to resist and dismember the Government.  
Patriotic as he was, he sank the patriotism  
in the patriot <sup>in his famous address</sup> and prophesied his



advocates by delay, We are  
all Federalists, all Republicans.  
I could wish that you would  
thus I wish to follow the example  
in this crisis. Be sure that when  
all your Administration consists in  
being in harmony with Republican principles  
and policy, you cannot lose the  
Republican party, by practicing in  
your advent to office the magnanimity  
of a victor.

Very faithfully your friend,  
William H. Seward,

To Honorable  
Abraham Lincoln.