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Primary Source Document Transcription

Made available through the Rhode Island State Archives

Votes on the ratification of the Constitution, 1788

When Rhode Island's General Assembly was asked to hold a convention to ratify the US Constitution, it refused. Instead the General Assembly asked the freemen of each town to vote on whether to ratify. This is a cumulative tally of the votes in favor and against ratification. Some Rhode Islanders, sensing that the ratification question would fail, boycotted the vote. Their absence explains the very low "yea" numbers in several towns, particularly Newport and Providence.

Fun fact: check the math! You'll find that their addition is not correct. Even worse, the original tallies from some towns do not match up with the tallies on this document. According to the reports from each town, the actual numbers were: 239 votes in favor of the Constitution and 2711 against.

A List of the Yeas & Nays from the respective Towns are as follows –

	No. Yeas	No. of Nays
Newport	1	10
Providence		1
Warwick	3	140
Portsmouth	12	60
Westerly	12	56
South Kingstown	1	125
New Shoram		32
North Kingstown	2	160
East Greenwich	2	91
Jamestown	5	11
Smithfield	2	150
Situate	2	156
Glouster	9	228
Coventry		100
West Greenwich	2	145
Charlestown	6	51
Exeter	6	136
Bristol	26	23
Tiverton	23	92
Little Compton	63	57
Warren	2	41

*This transcript is intended to capture the substance of the document.
For details of capitalization, punctuation, spelling and spacing, we recommend consulting the original document.*

Cumberland	10	113
Richmond	1	60
Hopkinton	33	95
Johnston	1	79
Cranston		101
Middle Town	6	40
North Providence		40
Barrington	9	34
Foster	<u> </u>	<u>177</u>
	237	2708

This primary source comes from the Rhode Island State Archives, C#0238 – Papers Relating to the Adoption of the United States Constitution, 1785 – 1790, folders 1 – 3.