

**Thomas Jefferson to Edward Tiffin, February 2, 1807,
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Leicester Ford.**

TO THE GOVERNOR OF OHIO J. MSS. (H. D. TIFFIN.)

Washington, February 2d, 1807.

Sir, —The pressure of business during a session of the Legislature has rendered me more tardy in addressing you than it was my wish to have been. That our fellow citizens of the West would need only to be informed of criminal machinations against the public safety to crush them at once, I never entertained a doubt. I have seen with the greatest satisfaction that among those who have distinguished themselves by their fidelity to their country, on the occasion of the enterprise of Mr. Burr, yourself & the Legislature of Ohio have been the most eminent. The promptitude & energy displayed by your State has been as honorable to itself as salutary to its sister States; and in declaring that you have deserved well of your country, I do but express the grateful sentiment of every faithful citizen in it. The hand of the people has given the mortal blow to a conspiracy which, in other countries, would have called for an appeal to armies, and has proved that government to be the strongest of which every man feels himself a part. It is a happy illustration, too, of the importance of preserving to the State authorities all that vigor which the Constitution foresaw would be necessary, not only for their own safety, but for that of the whole. In making these acknowledgments of the merit of having set this illustrious example of exertion for the common safety, I pray that they may be considered as addressed to yourself & the Legislature particularly, & generally to every citizen who has availed himself

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of the opportunity given of proving his devotion to his country. Accept my salutations & assurances of great consideration & esteem.¹

¹ Later the President wrote to the Secretary at War:

“ Washington, Oct 27, 07.

“ Dear Sir,—I have reflected on the case of the embodying of the militia in Ohio, and think the respect we owe to the State may overweigh the disapprobation so justly due to the conduct of their Governor pro tern. They certainly had great merit, and have acquired a very general favor thro' the Union, for the early & vigorous blows by which they crushed the insurrection of Burr. We have now again to appeal to their patriotism & public spirit in the same case; and should there be war, they are our bulwark in the most prominent point of assault from the Indians. Their good will & affection, therefore, should be conciliated by all justifiable means. If we suffer the question of paying the militia embodied to be thrown on their legislature, it will excite acrimonious debate in that body, & they will spread the same dissatisfaction among their constituents, and finally it will be forced back on us through Congress. Would it not, therefore, be better to say to Mr. Kirker, that the general government is fully aware that emergencies which appertain to them will sometimes arise so suddenly as not to give time for consulting them, before the State must get into action; that the expenses in such cases, incurred on reasonable grounds, will be met by the general government; and that in the present case, altho' it appears there was no real ground for embodying the militia, and that more certain measures for ascertaining the truth should have been taken before embodying them, yet an unwillingness to damp the public spirit of our countrymen, & the justice due to the individuals who came forward in defence of their country, & who could not know the grounds on which they were called, have determined us to consider the call as justifiable, & to defray the expenses. This is submitted to you for consideration. Affectionate salutations.”