

an uniform militia throughout the United States": By the last ~~mentioned~~ Act the Militia are required to arm and equip themselves at their own expense, and by the Act of the general Assembly of this State, passed at their last Session in execution of the Law of Congress, the same requisition is made, but as the Law of Congress imposes no penalty at all for the omission, and the Law of this State (a copy of which is enclosed, imposes only a fine of four Cents per annum, it follows that a compliance with this direction is perfectly discretionary with our Citizens: and this imbecility in the laws is greatly increased by the consideration that a large portion of our people are not in a situation to furnish themselves with the articles required, and that, even if they were, arms are not to be procured in Maryland unless from Government, and not even from Government, beyond five or six thousand stand, over which we have no such control as would authorize us to distribute them on any terms among the Militia.

You will readily perceive from what has been said, that the number of men pointed out as the proportion of Maryland will not in all probability be armed and equipped under the Militia Regulations at present subsisting: there is nothing in the Laws before mentioned sufficiently compulsory in this respect to produce obedience to them, and it is extremely probable that the mode adopted by Congress for providing arms &c will not, from the nature of it, be ever more than nominally enforced by the Laws of this State: and there is no question that the People at this time, however, well disposed, have it not in their power to make the provision demanded. Hitherto we are certain no such provision has been made, and for the reasons before assigned, it is at best doubtful whether any will be made in future.

With a view to the organization of the Militia, it is proper to be observed that it's completion has hitherto been retarded by a variety of unforeseen difficulties, but that there is now a prospect of it's being speedily concluded: The President may be assured that it shall be completed with all possible dispatch, and that every object comprized in your Letter shall as far as we have power, be accomplished without delay.

You will be pleased Sir, to lay this communication before the President of the United States, in order that the practical utility and the means of remedying the Defect above mentioned may receive timely consideration, and that in case the public security requires it, proper measures may be immediately pursued for securing a more effectual accomplishment of the views of the General Government, than are at present to be expected in this State.

The Hon^{ble} Henry Knox Esq^r
Secretary of War

Wm. L. Garrison
The S. L.