

Washington 20 July 1848

Gentlemen/

I have received your very kind letter to the 15th Instant inquiring whether I would consort to become a candidate for nomination as Governor before the approaching Democratic State Convention. In that event, you assure me that the Democrats of York County, at their county meeting to be held on the 7th August will unanimously present my name, as their candidate to the people of Pennsylvania. This powerful appeal proceeding as it does from "old Democratic York" would, if any circumstance could, shake my resolution. Before its receipt, however, I had fully determined not to become a candidate for the Office of Governor & had expressed this determination in answer to numerous inquiries addressed to me from different quarters of the State. I must, therefore, respectfully request ~~my Democratic friends of your County not to mention my name~~ that my name may not be mentioned at your county meeting in connection with this high office at ~~their County meeting~~ [above: preceding strike through ~~your meeting~~].

I have been, for many years, uniformly sustained by the Democracy of my native State & am content with the ample share of public honor which they have already conferred upon me. It is ~~when both interfere~~ my intention & desire to return to private at the close of the present administration; but I shall bear with me into retirement a deep devotion to these principles & a heart overflowing with gratitude for all their kindness. ~~To me they have ever been indulgent masters.~~ They have ever treated me with utmost indulgence. Throughout my long ~~public~~ political career ~~of public service~~. I am not aware that the Democracy of Pennsylvania have [sic] ever condemned vote, speech, or public act of mine. Upon a late trying occasion they ~~in the state in Penna~~ cast over me the mantle of their ~~powerful~~ protection & true in pliantly defended & sustained me ~~as the candidate of the State for the Presidencies~~, against the incipient assaults of men high in power & office within our Commonwealth both under the ~~general & state~~ State & General administrations. To them, under Providence, I am indebted for all the public distinction I have every enjoyed; ~~& which Heaven~~ and I should but [?] requite them for all they have done for me were I now to solicit new favors at their hands or stand in the way of worthy Democratic friends who may desire to become candidates for the Governor's office. Their ~~old~~ long tried servant now only ~~desires~~ asks an honorable discharge, ~~and the privilege which he knows will be that he may return to his home & enjoy the pleasure & the privileges granted of mingling with them as a private citizen~~ & again enjoy the pleasure & the privilege of associating with them as a private citizen.

With you I sincerely regret the lamentable illness of our good Governor, which has created the necessity for ~~the~~ selecting a candidate as his successor to fill his place. It is fortunate,



however, that Pennsylvania can proudly point to many Democrats among her sons eminently worthy of this distinguished honor.

The position of chief magistrate of our great glorious old Commonwealth requires eminent abilities & integrity not merely beyond the reach, but beyond the suspicion, of temptation. ~~Nay more, It requires high~~ also demands unwavering moral firmness & self reliance, without which my observation has convinced me ~~however well qualified in other respects~~ that no man is fit to discharge the duties of a high executive office. ~~These qualities can alone protect such an officer against the influence of the designing and the interested. I insure a just & impartial performance.~~

The approaching Governors [sic] election ~~for Governors of Pennsylvania~~ as you suggest, will ~~have~~ doubtless exercise a ~~powerful and~~ commanding influence when the Presidential election. The selection of our candidate ought therefore to be with great care. He ~~ought~~ should not only ~~to~~ possess the necessary qualifications ~~to discharge the important duties of his office;~~ but he ought to be ~~such~~ a Democrat & we have many such in whose support the whole party would cordially & enthusiastically unite. ~~If you should be fortunate in your selection, I would then consider the election of Cass & Butler as morally certain.~~

There has scarcely been a Presidential election since the origin of the Government of greater importance than that which is approaching. We ~~ought~~ should therefore ~~to~~ strain every nerve in sustaining the principle & the Candidates of the glorious party whose continued ascendancy is identified, as I firmly believe, not only with the prosperity but the ~~perfecting~~ permanence of the Union. Dire & ~~angry~~ portentous clouds, ~~are now~~ from an unexpected quarters now obscure our political horizon. ~~Under these circumstances~~ In the hour of danger, our only security is to follow, with a firm & unflinching step, our time honored flag. ~~Throughout the impending storm with unwavering fidelity.~~ This will guide us, as it has often done before, into the haven. ~~The spirit of conciliation & compromise.~~ Cass & Butler, & whatever other name the Democratic Convention at Harrisburg may inscribe upon our banners as the candidate for Governor into the haven of safety.

[Crossed out from another letter?: which presided at the birth of our Institution will enable us to settle the delicate & dangerous question of Slavery upon the fair & equitable principles & thus preserve our]

And now how shall I adequately express my ~~gratitude~~ obligations to the true hearted Democracy of "Old Democratic York" ~~County. With them my [acquaintance?] for all their kindness. In the sun shine & in the storm through may long years they have ever been my fast friends & all that all that I can offer them I return is a deep sense of gratitude which can never terminate but with my existence.~~ And, now, how shall I adequately express my obligations to the intelligent & true hearted Democracy of "Old Democratic York"! In the ~~wish many of them I have social~~ intercourse enjoyed the pleasure of a long & intimate personal acquaintance & know how to



~~appreciate their [?] & know will how to appreciate their value~~ the value of all. In the sun shine & in the storm, through many long years they have ever been faithful & true to me. All that I can offer them in return is the grateful devoted homage of a ~~heart~~ grateful heart.

With sentiments of the highest respect, I remain

Your friend,

James Buchanan

~~probably the most trying occasion of my entire life~~

