

Honorable Mention, Dear George Washington Contest 2013
Merri Kelly, Fifth Grade
Friends Academy

My name is Bailey Watson and I am a runaway slave. I am twenty six years old and “live” in Texas.

May 1, 1789

Dear President George Washington,

I have been hiding out in houses for three years now and am fearful because the slave catchers are looking for rewards. When they find runaway slaves like me, they catch them and kill them. I was fortunate to have been able to learn to read and write because I worked for a family who had a young boy in school. I stayed with him during all of his lessons.

I would like to suggest that during your first term in office you focus on why slavery is protected in the new Constitution. I snuck into the inauguration when you gave your speech in New York and listened very carefully. You did not share much about your plans for the first term.

It seems that your feelings about slavery have changed over the years. While I know that you have owned slaves in your life, I know you were pleased that so many African Americans enlisted to fight in the Revolutionary War. It was also reported in 1778 that you disliked breaking up families of slaves. Also, you received a poem in your honor from a slave in 1775. She was praising you for being chosen to run the Continental army.

I know you want to abolish slavery but only through the appropriate legislation. You even doubted that it would happen. I was shocked when I heard you have over three hundred slaves but I have also heard that after your wife passes away you will let all the slaves free. You plan to educate the young ones and have the older freed slaves taken care of until death. I was very happy to hear that. Hopefully you will take my letter into consideration.

Sincerely,

Bailey Watson