

Rights

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Slave Petition to the Governor, Council, and House of Representatives of the Province of Massachusetts

25 May 1774 *MHS Collections, 5th ser., 3:432--33*

The Petition of a Grate Number of Blackes of this Province who by divine permission are held in a state of Slavery within the bowels of a free and christian Country

Humbly Shewing

That your Petitioners apprehind we have in common with all other men a naturel right to our freedoms without Being depriv'd of them by our fellow men as we are a freeborn Pepel and have never forfeited this Blessing by aney compact or agreement whatever.

But we were unjustly dragged by the cruel hand of power from our dearest frinds and sum of us stolen from the bosoms of our tender Parents and from a Populous Pleasant and plentiful country and Brought hither to be made slaves for Life in a Christian land. Thus are we deprived of every thing that hath a tendency to make life even tolerable, the endearing ties of husband and wife we are strangers to for we are no longer man and wife then our masters or mestreses thinkes proper marred or onmarred. Our children are also taken from us by force and sent maney miles from us wear we seldom or ever see them again there to be made slaves of for Life which sumtimes is vere short by Reson of Being dragged from

their mothers Breest Thus our Lives are imbittered to us on these
 accounts By our deplorable situation we are rendered incapable of
 shewing our obedience to Almighty God how can a slave perform
 the duties of a husband to a wife or parent to his child How can a
 husband leave master and work and cleave to his wife How can the
 wife submit themselves to there husbands in all things. How can
 the child obey thear parents in all things. There is a grāt number of
 us sencear . . . members of the Church of Christ how can the
 master and the slave be said to fulfil that command Live in love let
 Brotherly Love contuner and abound Beare yea onenothers
 Bordenes How can the master be said to Beare my Borden when he
 Beares me down whith the Have chanes of slavery and operson
 against my will and how can we fulfill our parte of duty to him
 whilst in this condition and as we cannot searve our God as we
 ought whilst in this situation Nither can we reap an equal benefet
 from the laws of the Land which doth not justifi but condemns
 Slavery or if there had bin aney Law to hold us in Bondege we are
 Humbely of the Opinon ther never was aney to inslave our children
 for life when Born in a free Countrey. We therefor Bage your
 Excellency and Honours will give this its deu weight and
 consideration and that you will accordingly cause an act of the
 legislative to be pessed that we may obtain our Natural right our
 freedoms and our children be set at lebetty at the yeare of Twenty
 one for whoues sekēs more petequēley your Petitioners is in Duty
 ever to Pray.

The Founders' Constitution Volume 1, Chapter 14, Document
 9 <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch14s9.html> The
 University of Chicago Press
Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society.