

MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE—RIGHT OF PETITION.

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RESOLUTIONS

ON THE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

*On the Right of Petition.*

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MAY 28, 1838.

Laid on the table.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

*Resolves on the right of petition.*

Whereas the House of Representatives of the United States did, on the twenty-first day of December last, adopt the following resolution, to wit:

“*Resolved*, That all petitions, memorials, and papers touching the abolition of slavery, or the buying, selling, or transferring of slaves, in any State, District, or Territory of the United States, be laid upon the table, without being debated, printed, read, or referred, and that no further action shall be had thereon.”

And whereas the said resolution is a virtual denial of the right of petition, which results from the very nature of our Government, and is secured by the constitution of the United States, and is also subversive of the freedom of debate:

And whereas, by force of the said resolution, the respectful memorials of many worthy citizens of this Commonwealth, and of other States, asking for the redress of a grievance over which Congress has exclusive control, as well as the resolves of the Legislature of this Commonwealth, have been deliberately slighted and contemned, and the voice of Massachusetts, through her representatives in Congress, has been silenced:

*Therefore, resolved*, That we, the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in General Court assembled, do, in the name of the people thereof, solemnly protest against the said resolution, as an assumption of power, in violation of the spirit of the constitution of the United States; subversive of the fundamental principles of our free institutions; at war with the prerogatives of the people; destructive of the relations between them and their representatives; derogatory to the dignity and rights of the States, and dangerous to the Union.

*Resolved*, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress, in their earnest and united assertion and defence of the right of petition, and  
Thomas Allen, print.

freedom of debate, against the attacks and assumptions of unauthorized power, deserve and have the continued and cordial approbation of the people of this Commonwealth.

*Resolved*, That his excellency the Governor be requested to forward a copy of these resolves to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress, with a request that the same may be laid before that body.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *April* 16, 1838.

Passed :

ROBERT C. WINTHROP, *Speaker*.

IN SENATE, *April* 17, 1838.

Passed :

MYRON LAWRENCE, *President*.

April 17, 1838. Approved :

EDWARD EVERETT.

A true copy—Attest :

JOHN P. BIGELOW,  
*Secretary of the Commonwealth.*