

MASSACHUSETTS.

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

*Upon the subject of Slavery in the District of Columbia, and the Right of Petition.*

SEPTEMBER 18, 1837.

Read, and laid upon the table.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty-Seven.

*Resolves on sundry petitions relative to slavery in the District of Columbia, and the right of petition.*

Whereas the House of Representatives of the United States, in the month of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven, did adopt a resolution whereby it was ordered that all petitions, memorials, resolutions, propositions, or papers, relating in any way or to any extent whatever to the subject of slavery, or the abolition of slavery, without being either printed or referred, should be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever should be had thereon: and whereas such a disposition of petitions, then or thereafter to be received, was a virtual denial of the right itself: and whereas, by the resolution aforesaid, which was adopted as a standing rule of the aforesaid House of Representatives, the petitions of a large number of the people of this Commonwealth, praying for the removal of a great social, moral, and political evil, have been slighted and contemned: therefore,

*Resolved,* That the resolution above named is an assumption of power and authority at variance with the spirit and intent of the constitution of the United States, and injurious to the cause of freedom and free institutions; that it does violence to the inherent, absolute, and inalienable rights of man, and that it tends essentially to impair those fundamental principles of natural justice and natural law which are antecedent to any written constitutions of government, independent of them all, and essential to the security of freedom in a state.

*Resolved,* That our Senators and Representatives in Congress, in maintaining and advocating the full right of petition, have entitled themselves to the cordial approbation of the people of this Commonwealth.

Thomas Allen, print.

*Resolved*, That Congress having exclusive legislation in the District of Columbia, possess the right to abolish slavery in the said District, and that its exercise should only be restrained by a regard to the public good.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *April 10, 1837.*

Passed. JULIUS ROCKWELL, *Speaker.*

IN SENATE, *April 11, 1837.*

Passed. HORACE MANN, *President.*

April 12, 1837.—Approved: EDWARD EVERETT.

A true copy.—Attest :

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