

TRANSCRIPTION

Petition of 160 Inhabitants of Prince Edward County, September 24, 1776

To the Honourable the President and House of Delegates of the Common Wealth of Virginia, to meet at Williamsburg the first Tuesday in October 1776.

The Petition of Sundry of the Inhabitants of Prince Edward County, respectfully sheweth, That we heartily approve and cheerfully submit ourselves to the form of Government adopted at your last Session: hoping that our united American States will long continue free and Independent.

The last Article of the Bill of Rights we also esteem as the rising Sun of religious Liberty, to relieve us from a long Night of ecclesiastic Bondage: And we do most earnestly request and expect that you would go on to complete what is so nobly begun; raise religious as well as civil Liberty to the Zenith of Glory, and make Virginia an Asylum for free enquiry, knowledge, and the virtuous of every Denomination. Justice to ourselves and Posterity, as well as a regard to the honour of the Common Wealth, makes it our indispensable Duty, in particular to intreat, That without Delay, You would pull down all Church E[s]tablishments; Abolish every Tax upon Conscience and private Judgment; and leave each Individual to rise or sink according to his Merit, and the general Laws of the Land. The whole amount of what we desire, is, That Our Honourable Legislature would blot out every Vestige of British Tyranny and Bondage, and define accurately between civil and ecclesiastic Authority; then leave our Lord Jesus Christ the Honour of being the Sole Lawgiver and Governor in his Church; and every one in the Things of Religion to stand or fall to Him; he being, in this respect the only rightful Master.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound, shall every pray;—

September 24th 1776

Citation: Virginia General Assembly, Legislative Petitions of the General Assembly, Petition of 160 inhabitants of Prince Edward County, September 24, 1776, presented to the House of Delegates on October 11, 1776, Prince Edward County, Record Group 78, State Government Records Collection, Library of Virginia.