

To the Honorable the Speaker & Gentlemen of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia The Petition of Divers of the Freeholders and Other Free-Inhabitants of Amherst County

Humblly sheweth That some of your Petitioners have seen, and the rest have heard of the Dra^t of a Bill bro^ught into your Hon^{le} House last Session for giving Free and equal Liberty and Privileges in matters of Religion to all the Inhabitants of this Commonwealth - Which we apprehend was Printed & Published by Order of your Hon^{le} House That they might at the next Session be the better & more fully informed of the Sentiments of the People in General before they proceed to determine finally upon this great & important Point. - And we assure you Gentlemen It is with much Satisfaction That we your Petitioners who are Compos'd of Church of England-men Presbyterians Baptists and Methodists do all unanimously & with One Voice hereby declare to your Hon^{le} House our hearty Assent Concurrence & Approbation to the purport of the said Bill and desire that the same may be pass'd into a Law. - Fully Persuaded Gentlemen That the Religion of Jesus Christ may and ought to be Committed to the Protection Guidance & Blessing of its Divine Author and needs not the Interposition of any Human Power for its Establishment & Support. We most earnestly desire and Pray that not only an Universal Toleration may take Place, but that all the Subjects of this Free State may be put upon the same footing, and enjoy equal Liberties & Privileges which we think (Consistent with the 10th Paragraph of the Declaration of Rights) can no longer with any shadow of Justice be withheld. Permit us Gentlemen only further to observe, As it is generally allow'd that Force or Constraint when apply'd to any of the enjoyments of sense do entirely mar & destroy all the satisfactions which would result from them. - How astonishing is it then That Religion which consists in a voluntary offering up our souls to God, and Devoting our Bodies to his Service should be bound down to any One particular Form devised by only meer men like ourselves, Or those who Refuse it (besides providing for their own) must be burthen'd with Taxes and Contributions for the support of the Ministers & Teachers of another Form of Worship which their Consciences will not suffer them to Conform to. - Justice & Reason looks with disdain, & Religion looses her Angels face & looks pale and sickly at the thought of such unrighteous Distinctions. - And we desire & Instruct you our worthy & faithful Representatives for this County & District Nicholas Cabell & John Rose Esq^r Delegates, - and William Cabell Esq^r Senator, to Vote for, and use your best endeavours to Promote a total & final Repeal of all laws giving Rise to them. - That the Almighty may inspire the Councils & give success to all the Determinations of your Hon^{le} House for both the Temporal & Eternal Interests of the whole Community - We your Petitioners, Gentlemen, as in Duty bound, shall ever Pray

Henry Martin
John Murrell Jun^r
John Heard

Thomas Jefferson
John Morison
John Phillips
John Montgomerie

Am-7

Matthew Harris
 she Harris
 Joseph Tucker
 Robert Barnitt
 John M. Gomez
 Drury Tucker
 John Tucker
 Dan. Tucker
 Matthew Tucker
 Matthew Wilson
 Gilbert Cotrell
 William Tucker
 James Menes
 James Menes Junr
 William Whiteiths
 Nath. Mantishy
 Charles Tucker
 Benoni Stone
 George Salin
 Levy Baldock
 William Dixon
 William Tucker
 John Gachob
 John Gachob
 James Wharton
 Saml. Reid
 Michael Meneely
 William Martin^r
 Wm. Martin^r
 Thomas Robitson
 Alex. Reid
 Alex. Reid minor
 Henry Pitt
 George Roddy
 William Foy
 William Knight
 William Kilbitt
 Joshua Bush

Leonard Phillips
 David D. Poffet
 William Martin
 Hudson Martin
 Wm. Thurmond jun
 John Derrice

Amherst port
 November 1st 1779
 Ref. to whole
 Religious Bile.