



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > The Creation and Ratification of the Bill of Rights > Origins of the American Bill Of Rights > Early State Constitutions

Connecticut

Connecticut Bill of Rights, 1786

An Act containing an Abstract and Declaration of the Rights and Privileges of the People of this State, and securing the same.

The People of this State, being by the Providence of God, free and independent, have the sole and exclusive Right of governing themselves as a free, sovereign, and independent State; and having from their Ancestors derived a free and excellent Constitution of Government, whereby the Legislature depends on the free and annual Election of the People, they have the best Security for the Preservation of their civil and religious Rights and Liberties. And forasmuch as the free Fruition of such Liberties and Privileges as Humanity, Civility and Christianity call for, as is due to every Man in his Place and Proportion, without Impeachment and Infringement, hath ever been, and will be the Tranquility and Stability of Churches and Commonwealths; and the denial thereof, the Disturbance, if not the Ruin of both.

Be it Enacted and Declared by the Governor, Council and Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That the ancient Form of Civil Government, contained in the Charter from Charles the Second, King of England, and adopted by the People of this State, shall be and remain the Civil Constitution of this State, under the sole Authority of the People thereof, independent of any King or Prince whatever. And that this Republic is, and shall forever be and remain, a free, sovereign and independent State, by the Name of the STATE of CONNECTICUT.

And be it further Enacted and Declared by the Authority aforesaid, That no Man's Life shall be taken away: No Man's Honor or good Name shall be stained: No Man's Person shall be arrested, restrained, banished, dismembered, nor any ways punished: No Man shall be deprived of his Wife or Children: No Man's Goods or Estate shall be taken away from him, nor any ways indamaged under the colour of Law, or countenance of Authority; unless clearly warranted by the Laws of this State.

That all the free Inhabitants of this or any other of the United States of America, and Foreigners in Amity with this State, shall enjoy the same Justice and Law within this State, which is general for the State, in all Cases, proper for the Cognizance of the Civil Authority and Courts of Judicature within the same, and that without Partiality or Delay.

And that no Man's Person shall be restrained, or imprisoned, by any Authority whatsoever, before the Law hath sentenced him thereunto, if he can and will give sufficient Security, Bail, or Mainprize for his Appearance and good Behaviour in the mean Time, unless it be for Capital

Crimes, Contempt in open Court, or in such Cases wherein some express Law doth allow of, or order the same.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XXXVII: Bill of Rights [1] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2019), 63–64.