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New Jersey

New Jersey Constitution, 1776 (excerpts)

16. That all criminals shall be admitted to the same privileges of witnesses and counsel, as their prosecutors are or shall be entitled to.

17. That the estates of such persons as shall destroy their own lives shall not, for that offence, be forfeited; but shall descend in the same manner as they would have done, had such persons died in the natural way; nor shall any article which may occasion accidentally the death of any one, be henceforth deemed a deodand, or in anywise forfeited on account of such misfortune.

18. That no person shall ever within this colony be deprived of the inestimable privilege of worshipping Almighty God in a manner agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience; nor under any pretence whatever be compelled to attend any place of worship, contrary to his own faith and judgment; nor shall any person within this colony ever be obliged to pay tithes, taxes, or any other rates, for the purpose of building or repairing any other church or churches, place or places of worship, or for the maintenance of any minister or ministry, contrary to what he believes to be right, or has deliberately or voluntarily engaged himself to perform.

19. That there shall be no establishment of any one religious sect in this province, in preference to another; and that no protestant inhabitants of this colony shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil right, merely on account of his religious principles; but that all persons, professing a belief in the faith of any protestant sect, who shall demean themselves peaceably under the government as hereby established, shall be capable of being elected into any office of profit or trust, or being a member of either branch of the legislature, and shall fully and freely enjoy every privilege and immunity enjoyed by others their fellow subjects. . . .

22. That the common law of England, as well as so much of the statute law as have been heretofore practised in this colony, shall still remain in force, until they shall be altered by a future law of the legislature; such parts only excepted as are repugnant to the rights and privileges contained in this charter; and that the inestimable right of trial by jury shall remain confirmed, as a part of the law of this colony, without repeal for ever.

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