

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 26, 1862.

Mr. SUMNER, of Massachusetts, asked, and by unanimous consent obtained, leave to bring in the following bill; which was read the first and second times, and ordered to lie on the table and be printed.

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**A BILL**

To relieve the national government of all obligation to support slavery and of all responsibility for it under the Constitution.

To the end that just relations may be established between the national government and the several States, and in order to relieve the former of all obligation to support slavery and of all responsibility for it under the Constitution of the United States: Therefore—

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*  
3       That all the acts of Congress, or parts of acts, providing for  
4       the rendition of persons escaped from service or labor, are  
5       hereby repealed.

1       SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That there shall be  
2       neither slavery nor involuntary servitude otherwise than in  
3       the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall be duly  
4       convicted, in any of the following places, viz:

5           First. In any Territory of the United States now existing  
6 or hereafter to be formed or acquired in any way.

7           Secondly. In any place purchased or to be purchased by  
8 the United States, with the consent of the legislature of a  
9 State, for the erection of a fort, magazine, arsenal, dock-  
10 yard, or other needful building.

11          Thirdly. In any vessel on the high seas beyond the ter-  
12 ritory or jurisdiction of any State.

13          Fourthly. In any place whatsoever where the national  
14 government has exclusive jurisdiction.

1           SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That any person now  
2 or hereafter detained as a slave in any of the places above-  
3 named is hereby declared to be free, and the right to freedom  
4 now declared may be asserted in any court of the United  
5 States, or of any State, in behalf of the party, or his pos-  
6 terity, notwithstanding any lapse of time, upon the principle  
7 that a party once free is always free; and in all proceedings  
8 under this act there shall be no exclusion of any witness on  
9 account of color.

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