

MASSACHUSETTS, CITIZENS OF—SLAVERY.

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**MEMORIAL**

OF

**CITIZENS OF EDGARTOWN,**

*Upon the subject of slavery, particularly in the District of Columbia.*

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FEBRUARY 6, 1832.

Read, and laid upon the table.

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*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:*

The undersigned, inhabitants of Edgartown, in the State of Massachusetts, respectfully represent,—That they are among the citizens of our common country, who, from an early period, have deprecated the existence of slavery therein. We believe the system to have originated in the violation of the fundamental principles of the christian religion, and that it equally militates with the well being of individuals, of communities, and nations.

We rejoice to witness the extension of just views on this subject throughout the civilized world, and that the amelioration of the condition of man, and his advancement in the scale of intellectual and accountable beings, is among the duties, the performance of which is expected of every government claiming an enlightened character.

We are not insensible to the supposed delicacy of the subject to which we refer, and the extreme sensibility of many of our fellow-citizens in relation to it. We hope our views will not be mistaken. Whilst we deem the existence of slavery an evil of the greatest magnitude, we will not indulge the thought that it is an evil peculiarly chargeable upon our fellow-citizens amongst whom it more immediately exists, or that, by them, it is *willingly* entailed, with all its increasing power upon our country. On the contrary, we are conscious that they, who have its evils daily before them, cannot be insensible to their consequences, and that with them indeed must originate any successful attempt to seek a remedy.

We are aware of the many difficulties which must present themselves in the way of emancipation, but we would banish the thought that because the evil is so extensive and difficult of remedy, or because much time and patient perseverance will be required in applying that remedy, which if prudently administered, must be slow in its operation, therefore the philanthropist and statesman may turn from it in despair.

We believe that slavery justly deserves the character of a national evil, and calls for national as well as individual efforts, for its removal.

The time having already arrived when the citizens of the District of Columbia, as well for their own benefit as for the honor and consistency of our Government, ask of you to take measures to eradicate the growing evil within that District,—we therefore especially pray, that your honorable body will consider and give due weight to the memorial of those citizens; and that, in your wisdom, you will use and apply all practicable measures whereby an evil, so inconsistent with the benign influence of christianity, and with every characteristic of a free government, shall at least be banished from the seat of Government of these United States.