

The Constitution of 1776

The Declaration of Rights, and the Constitution and Form of Government

ESTABLISHED BY THE CONVENTION OF MARYLAND
HELD AT THE CITY OF ANNAPOLIS, ON WEDNESDAY
THE 14TH AUGUST, ANNO DOMINI 1776.

THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS.¹

The parliament of Great-Britain, by a declaratory act, having assumed a right to make laws to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever, and in pursuance of such claim endeavored by force of arms to subjugate the United Colonies to an unconditional submission to their will and power, and having at length constrained them to declare themselves independent states, and to assume government under the authority of the people, therefore, We, the delegates of Maryland, in free and full Convention assembled, taking into our most serious consideration the best means of establishing a good constitution in this state, for the sure foundation, and more permanent security thereof, declare,

1. That all government of right originates from the people, is founded in compact only, and instituted solely for the good of the whole.
2. That the people of this State ought to have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police thereof.
3. That the inhabitants of Maryland are entitled to the common law of England, and the trial by jury, according to the course of that law, and to the benefit of such of the English statutes, as existed at the time of their first emigration, and which by experience have been found applicable to their

¹This is a verbatim reprint of the first recorded printed edition of the Maryland Declaration of Rights and Constitution. It was printed in Annapolis in 1776 by Frederick Green. The punctuation and capitalization is that originally used. The copy of the 1776 edition from which this reprint was prepared is owned by the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. The Convention's handwritten draft is on file at the Hall of Records, Annapolis. With the adoption of this Declaration of Rights and Constitution, republican government was established in Maryland.