

Executive, or any other power in the State, ventures to condemn the motive of the citizen in the exercise of it.

The privacy of the ballot is guarded by law expressly that each voter may determine his choice, upon whatever consideration of private judgment he may choose to cast a vote, and that no man may question the grounds of such vote, or make it the subject of odious or offensive comment before the public. The privilege and the security of this exemption from all challenge, is too obvious to be discussed amongst a people born to the inheritance of free government. Every citizen has a right, which our institutions recognize as secured by a peculiar pledge of protection, to perfect freedom of judgment upon the political or religious opinions, upon the morals or the creed, no less than upon the character and capacity of any one who is submitted to the arbitrament of his vote or of his selection as a candidate for a place of trust in the administration of our governments, State or Federal, and he may determine that vote or selection by the weight which his own personal convictions may attach to any of these considerations. The spirit of republican freedom, no less than the positive law, secures him an inviolable immunity from all question of his motive. The attempt to arraign any citizen, or any number of citizens, for public judgment, and condemnation for these motives, is an invasion of personal right, scarcely less flagrant than the political proscriptions which history exhibits to us as the invariable signs and portents of the decay of free States.

The recommendation of Legislative interposition to suppress this free exercise of private judgment is so conspicuously in conflict with the sentiment that has been nursed in the heart of our American communities from their infancy to the present day, and so repulsive to the elemental precepts of our republican system, that the committee are most reluctant to believe that the Executive could seriously entertain the purposes which the message infers, or the most remote expectation that it could be responded to by a patriotic and intelligent Legislature in any other language than that of prompt and indignant dissent. It would have been more satisfactory to the committee if the Governor, when writing the letter to explain his message, had indicated what part of the Federal Constitution, or of the Constitution of Maryland for-