

any court of law in this state, where the petition or petitions shall be dismissed, or upon trial the judgment be against such petitioner or petitioners; the attorney prosecuting or appearing to the same shall pay all legal costs arising thereon, unless the court, before whom the same may be brought; shall be of opinion, under all circumstances, that there was probable ground to suppose the said petitioner or petitioners had a right to freedom; and in all cases of petitions for freedom now depending in any court of law in this state, except on appeal, where a similar petition or petitions, at the suit of the same party or parties, has or have been before filed and dismissed, the court before whom such petition or petitions are depending shall order a stay of all proceedings until the costs of the former petition or petitions, and all reasonable demands and expences sustained or incurred by the defendant or defendants therein, to be ascertained by the court, shall have been paid or secured to be paid.—*ibid.* § 25.

67. In case the said costs, damages and expences, shall not be paid within 6 months after the court shall have ordered a stay of proceedings, and ascertained the said damages and expences as aforesaid, the defendant or defendants in such petition or petitions, so depending, and his, her or their securities, shall be discharged from any recognizance by him, her or them, entered into, in consequence of such petition or petitions being filed, and the said petition shall be forthwith dismissed.—*ibid.* § 26.

68. If any petition for freedom shall hereafter be filed in any court of law in this state and dismissed, and a second petition filed at the suit of the same party, the court in which such second petition may be filed shall order a stay of all proceedings until the costs of the former petition, and all reasonable damages and expences sustained or incurred by the defendant or defendants therein to be ascertained by the court, shall have been paid or secured to be paid.—*ibid.* § 27.

69. It shall be the duty of the several county courts of this state to give this act in charge to the several grand juries of their respective counties.—*ibid.* § 28.

70. An act passed in April 1783, c. 23, entitled, An act to prohibit the bringing of slaves into this state, and an act passed in 1791, c. 57, entitled, A supplement to the act, entitled, An act to prohibit the bringing slaves into this state, and to alter and amend parts of the said act, and an act passed in 1791, c. 75, entitled, An act concerning petitions for freedom, and an act passed in 1793, entitled, A supplement to an an act concerning petitions for freedom, and an act passed in 1794, entitled, A further supplement to an act to prohibit the bringing slaves into this state, are repealed; but all rights heretofore acquired under the said repealed laws, shall not be affected by this act.—*ibid.* § 31.