

# ALTERATIONS IN THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, THE CONSTITUTION AND FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

**AN ACT (a)** to alter such parts of the declaration of rights, the constitution and form of government, as prevent persons conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath from being witnesses in all cases.

**WHEREAS** persons conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath, labour under many and great inconveniences, owing to their not being admitted to make their solemn affirmation as witnesses in all cases instead of an oath; therefore,

**IT BE IT ENACTED** by the *General Assembly of Maryland*, That the people called Quakers, those called Nicolites, or New Quakers, those called Tunkers, and those called Menopists, holding it unlawful to take an oath on any occasion, shall be allowed to make their solemn affirmation as witnesses, in the manner that quakers have been heretofore allowed to affirm, which affirmation shall be of the same avail as an oath, to all intents and purposes whatever.

**III. AND BE IT ENACTED**, That before any of the persons aforesaid shall be admitted as a witness in any court of justice in this state, the court shall be satisfied, by such testimony as they may require, that such person is one of those who profess to be conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath.

**IV. AND BE IT ENACTED**, That if this act shall be confirmed by the general assembly, after the next election of delegates, in the first session after such new election, as the constitution and form of government directs, that in such case this act, and the alterations and amendment of the constitution and form of government therein contained, shall be taken and considered, and shall constitute and be valid, as part of the said constitution and form of government, to all intents and purposes, any thing in the said declaration of rights, constitution and form of government contained, to the contrary notwithstanding.

**V. AND BE IT ENACTED**, That the several clauses and sections of the declaration of rights, constitution and form of government, contrary to the provisions of this act, so far as they respect either of the sects or societies aforesaid, shall be and are hereby declared to be repealed and annulled, on the confirmation hereof.

**AN ACT (b)** to confirm an act, entitled, An act to alter such parts of the declaration of rights, the constitution and form of government, as prevent persons conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath from being witnesses in all cases.

**BE IT ENACTED**, by the *General Assembly of Maryland*, That an act passed at November session, seventeen hundred and ninety-seven, entitled, An act to alter such parts of the declaration of rights, the constitution and form of government, as prevent persons conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath from being witnesses in all cases, shall be and the same is hereby confirmed.

## THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

A DECLARATION by the Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled.

**WHEN**, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation:

We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments