

In Council August 21. 1799

Sir,

We have had the honour of receiving your Letter of the 10 Instant

our Legislature, we presume, did not intend to wound the dignity of Delaware as a State, or to insinuate that your Excellency would for a moment refuse your aid in affording justice to the Citizens of Maryland. The Resolution was grounded on the complaints of persons, who alledged that their property had been with held, and their Slaves encouraged to abscond. If grievances of that kind did exist, and injuries of that nature were produced by characters regardless of the duties imposed by Society, it certainly was time to seek a remedy by an amicable appeal to the constituted authorities of our Sister States. The legal rights of petitioners for freedom were not intended to be affected. But, Sir, your experience at the Bar will no doubt suggest to you, that claims of freedom are frequently preferred merely as a shield to protect the Slave from the service of the Master. a summary mode of enquiry on such occasions might prevent considerable inconvenience. The laws of Maryland are not only just but extremely liberal to those Negroes, who suppose they are illegally continued in Bondage. many hundreds have lately been liberated by the verdicts of Juries, and adjudications of our Courts. That circumstance proves that they need not take refuge to another State for the establishment of their rights. In fact