

State of Maryland  
Executive Department  
Annapolis Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> 1863

His Excellency  
Abraham Lincoln  
President United States

Dear Sir:

In the personal interview I had with your Excellency a few weeks since, upon the subject of the enlistment of slaves in this State, you stated that no orders had been given for such proceedings, and that the existence of such a practice had only been brought to your knowledge two days before.

I, at that time urged some of the most obvious objections to such a policy, to which you replied that the subject was then under consideration and you were good enough to say, in answer to my request to that effect, that whatever conclusion was reached as the result of your deliberations, should be communicated to me.

Several weeks having since elapsed without hearing from your Excellency, and the practice of which I complained still prevailing and increasing — a practice all the more reprehensible if pursued without your express authority — I feel constrained once more to bring it to your attention, and again to invoke your interposition in arresting it.

I beg leave to assure you, that burthened as I know you are, with the paramount responsibilities of preserving the Nation whose existence has been menaced during the whole period of your Administration, I am most reluctant to do anything calculated to add to your embarrassments. I trust you need no assurance, that neither the loyal citizens of this State nor myself would seek in ought to arrest or impede any action of the Government calculated to contribute to its safety or to crush the power of those who are assailing it.

An earnest conviction however that the practice to which I am adverting, is, in all its moral effects, exerting an influence in direct opposition to such results, not less than the sense of personal wrong, and of an unjust discrimination against this State; prompts these appeals.

Suffer me to make you acquainted with the course of proceeding usually adopted in these cases — as it has been reported to me — A steamer in Government employ provided with a recruiting officer and armed guard is sent into some of the many Rivers with which our State abounds, and this officer and guard immediately make known their presence and find means of communicating with the slaves on the neighboring farms; these slaves, usually under cover of the night are induced to quit their owners homes and to repair on board the Boat — The officer in charge exercising his arbitrary discretion — by no means regulated by the question of the owners loyalty — in carrying off one man's slaves and allowing another to return, and when his cargo of recruits is thus made up, he weighs anchor and delivers them at camp in a distant part of the State, sometimes before their owner is aware of their absence — These owners are not allowed access to them, and in some instances have been positively refused though their only and avowed purpose was to