

Chestertown October 29th 1864

To His Excellency

W. Bradford

Governor of Maryland.

Dear Sir:

An election for Electors of President and Vice President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, and for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, Senators and Delegates, as officers of the State, you are aware, is to be held, on Tuesday the 8th November, in the several Election districts of the Counties and in the various Wards of the City of Baltimore. The election thus to be held, exceeds in importance, any that has ever been held, in the State on any one day. The people are naturally awake to the great interests involved, and are looking to the period, when they are to assert their political privilege of voting by ballot free and unrestrained, except by the laws of the land. They turn to the Constitution under which we now live, and find in the first section of its first Article, that every white male citizen possessing certain qualifications shall be entitled to vote. In the first Article and fourth section of the new Constitution, recently and illegally adopted, the qualifications of the voters are specifically stated. The Constitution requires no other, and if a citizen possesses them, he is clearly entitled to exercise his Constitutional privilege.

The Act of Assembly to be found in Code page 261 provides a punishment against all persons who shall practice force and violence to influence unduly or to overawe, interrupt or hinder any elections &c. The 24th section of the same Article prohibits any commissioned or now commissioned officer, having command of soldiers, from marching or mustering within the view of any place of holding an election. These provisions and the whole scope and spirit of our laws, as well as the genius of our Government stamp with reprobation all improper interference with the freedom of Elections. Public opinion sustains or rejects those who administer the Government; Public sentiment, to exert its proper influence must be free and untrammelled; if forced, prevented or corrupted, the Government ceases to be Republican. But the Constitution, in order to guard the Elective franchise, preserve the ballot box from fraud and the elections from interference or molestation, and the form of Government from perversion and change, has placed the power in the hands, and made it the duty of the Executive to exercise it, to prevent such abuses and violations of Constitutional Law. In the 1st Article and 11th Section it is provided, that the Governor shall be Commander in Chief of the Land and naval forces of the State, and may call out the Militia to repel invasions, suppress insurrections and enforce the execution of the laws. By the 12th Section of the same Article it is ordained that "he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed" The same powers and duties are given and required in both the old and the new Constitutions. The cardinal reason for providing an Executive, as a department of the Government, was,