

nized by us as legal constitutional evidence of the binding law. The bill after being engrossed and passing into the form of this constitutional testimonial, may be with propriety destroyed, because it is superseded by that final evidence and is not required to be preserved, and cannot therefore be recorded, even as a memorandum of the legislative judgment. It may accidentally be preserved or left undisturbed among the documents of a particular session of the assembly, but such a repository of it thus casually existing, cannot serve to render it available to any effect or give it the character of evidence or even prove to a succeeding legislature that it was in fact the bill.

The succeeding legislature has no power or means, then, constitutionally of identifying the bill, no matter though, by ascertaining the signatures of the clerks on the bill or by the assurances from the officers of the particular branch of the legislature, who may chance to be continued or re-appointed as officers for the succeeding legislature, the individual members of that legislature may believe the paper exhibited to be the bill. The question recurs: does the constitution allow such *modes of evidence*, for this high object of testimony the enactments of the supreme legislative will? We cannot think that any such privilege is thus validly conceded to any general assembly. The constitution is precise and definite, and allows no discretion to individual judgment in any succeeding legislature to frame rules of evidence, or form mediums through which the will and voice of a prior legislature may be learned and heard. The consequences of any assumed latitude in this respect would be dangerous to individual rights, and to the public interests, in leaving unsettled in every case the evidence of legislative enactments, and in disavowing as the only and conclusive standard for such ascertainment, the constitutional provision. That provision is not only precisely descriptive of the evidence, but is exclusive of all other modes of evidence. And in prescribing this guarded authentication of acts, the state's sovereign faith is proffered to the community for the accuracy of their evidence, and the security of the testimonial as an inviolable and conclusive basis on which the rights of the citizen may repose, and his action be founded, and on which individual enterprise and interests may be embarked. The committee, therefore believe, that in this shape, as requested by the petition, and on the principle of constitutional construction, upon which it is asked, the object of the petition