

January 7, 1775.

to the INHABITANTS of ANNE-ARUNDEL county.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU are requested to meet at the city of Annapolis, on Monday the 16th instant, to nominate deputies to attend, on behalf of this county, at the next provincial convention, and to chuse a committee of observation; permit me to offer to your consideration, the reasons, which induce me to solicit your attendance on that day. The inconvenience arising from the season of the year, I am satisfied, will not prevent you, if convinced, that your duty to your country requires your attendance. You have always distinguished yourself in the cause of liberty, and never been exceeded by any county, in zeal and public spirit.

Your liberty and happiness, and that of your posterity, depend on the event of the present struggle with the British ministry: they seem determined to make you slaves, you are resolved to be free: the American congress has pointed out the means of preserving freedom: a suspension of your trade;—and the necessary preparations to enable you to repel force by force, if that should be employed to subvert your rights and liberties: these are the means recommended by the united opinion and advice of America. The freedom of millions, the political salvation of all British America, can only be secured by executing with fidelity and resolution the advice of the congress.

A strict compliance with the association and resolves of our late provincial convention, depends in great measure on a prudent and wise choice of your committee of observation: I would recommend it to consist of a considerable number of gentlemen of the best understanding, fortune, and influence in the county, without any regard to profession, religion, or residence; men able to speak your sense on any question, and to whose resolutions you would wish to give that weight, which their utility, and the public good might require.

The appointment of deputies, to represent this county, at the next convention, in April; which will not be held, if American grievances should in the mean time be redressed, appears to me of the greatest consequence, and to demand your most deliberate attention: If the British ministry should continue deaf to our complaints, and to the voice of reason, of policy, and justice, and should determine to enforce, at all events, its arbitrary decrees, how dreadful would be our situation, in the midst of all the horrors and calamities of civil war! We scorn, we reject with contempt, the base humiliating conditions of slavery—We are determined to resist even unto death, to save our country, or bravely perish in her ruins. If American grievances should not be redressed (and I fear they will not) questions of such a magnitude and difficulty will then arise, as to require the united wisdom, knowledge, and fortitude of this province. Your virtue will then be put to a severe trial—Consider then with attention, the nature and importance of the trust, and to whom you delegate your power at this very critical and alarming crisis of your affairs.—You never were called on to exercise your great constitutional right of electing your representatives, at a time which required more judgment in your choice. I would recommend but one *TEST*---*an honest man with ability and resolution*---

“The Congress thought themselves bound in duty to observe to the colonies, that the schemes agitated against them had been so conducted as to render it prudent, *that they should extend their views to the most unhappy events, and be in all respects prepared for every contingency*.” The necessary means of preparation were left to each province, as best acquainted with their own peculiar circumstances.---Your deputies met in provincial convention were of opinion, that a well regulated militia is the natural strength and only stable security of a free government, and *unanimously* recommended to the freemen of this province to form themselves into companies, chuse their officers, learn the military exercise, be provided with arms and ammunition, in readiness to act on any emergency, and to raise money for the purchase of arms and ammunition: They entreated, they conjured every man by his duty to God, his country; and his posterity, cordially to unite in defence of our common rights and liberties. I want no argument to convince me of the immediate necessity of putting this province in a posture of defence. If any one should object to the measure, I would answer, **THE CONGRESS ADVISED IT**:---*The deputies of all the counties of this province unanimously recommended it*: The first with me is sufficient, the latter conclusive: The deputies were gentlemen of the first fortunes, ability, and knowledge, well acquainted with our circumstances, and undoubtedly spoke the sense of the whole province. The private opinions of some few individuals, however respectable for integrity of character, soundness of judgement, and their attachment to the cause of America, ought to have little weight in opposition to the advice of the continental congress, and the recommendation of your own provincial convention.

I have not the least doubt that this county will inviolably observe and execute the association, and the resolves of the province: I question not but a very great majority of you will form yourselves into a militia, and liberally contribute for the purchase of arms and ammunition. Every man is bound to serve his country; all are obliged, or none. Every man is bound to contribute his endeavours to advance and secure the general good. This county is called