

Read the following excerpts from the Massachusetts Body of Liberties:

Pick one or two of the freedoms or liberties in this document, and write a short 1-to-2 page reflection on the following two questions:

Why is this freedom important?

What would our life in the USA be like if this wasn't respected?

1. No man's life shall be taken away, no man's honor or good name shall be stained, no man's person shall be arrested, restrained, banished, dismembered, nor any ways punished, no man shall be deprived of his wife or children, no man's goods or estate shall be taken away from him, nor in any way damaged under color of law, or countenance of authority, unless it be by virtue or equity of some express law of the Country warranting the same established by a General Court and sufficiently published, or in case of the defect of a law in any particular case by the word of God (the laws of the Bible). And in capital cases, or in cases concerning dismembering or banishment, according to that word to be judged by the General Court.

2. Every person within this jurisdiction, whether inhabitant or foreigner, shall enjoy the same justice and law, that is general for the Plantation, which we constitute and execute one towards another, without partiality or delay.

3. No man shall be urged to take any oath or subscribe any articles, covenants or remonstrance, of a public and civil nature, but such as the General Court hath considered, allowed and required.

4. No man shall be punished for not appearing at or before any civil assembly, Court, council, magistrate, or officer, nor for the omission of any office or service, if he shall be necessarily hindered by any apparent act or providence of God, which he could neither foresee or avoid. Provided that this law shall not prejudice any person of his just cost or damage in any civil action.

5. No man shall be compelled to any public work or service unless the press be grounded upon some act of the General Court, and have reasonable allowance therefore.

6. No man shall be pressed into any office, work, wars, or other public service, who is necessarily and sufficiently exempted by any natural or personal impediment, as by want of years, greatness of age, defect of mind, failing of senses, or impotence of limbs.

7. No man shall be compelled to go out of the limits of this plantation upon any offensive wars which this Commonwealth or any of our friends or confederates shall voluntarily undertake. But only upon such vindictive and defensive wars in our own behalf, or on the behalf of our friends, and confederates as shall be enterprised by the Council and consent of a General Court, or by authority derived from the same.

8. No man's cattle or goods of what kind soever shall be pressed or taken for any public use or service, unless it be by warrant grounded upon some act of the General Court, nor without such reasonable prices and hire as the ordinary rates of the Country do afford. And if his cattle or goods shall

perish or suffer damage in such service, the owner shall be sufficiently recompensed.

9. No monopolies shall be granted or allowed amongst us, but of such new inventions that are profitable to the Country, and that for a short time.

10. All our lands and heritages shall be free from all fines and licenses upon alienations, and from all harriotts, wardships, liveries, primerseisens, year-day and wast, escheats and forfeitures, upon the death of parents or ancestors, be they natural, casual or judicial.

50. All jurors shall be chosen continually by the Freemen of the town where they dwell.

51. All Associates selected at any time to assist the Assistants in inferior Courts shall be nominated by the towns belonging to that Court by orderly agreement among themselves.

52. Children, idiots, distracted persons, and all that are strangers or new-comers to our Plantation shall have such allowances and dispensations in any cause, whether criminal or other as religion and reason require.

54. Whensoever anything is to be put to vote, any sentence to be pronounced, or any other matter to be proposed or read in any Court or Assembly: if the president or moderator thereof shall refuse to perform it, the major part of the members of that Court or Assembly shall have power to appoint any other meet man to do it, and, if there be just cause, to punish him that should and would not.

55. In all suits or actions in any Court, the plaintiff shall have liberty to make all the titles and claims that he sues for he can. And the defendant shall have liberty to plead all the pleas he can in answer to them, and the Court shall judge according to the entire evidence of all.

57. Whensoever any person shall come to any very sudden untimely and unnatural death, some Assistant or the Constables of that town shall forthwith summon a jury of twelve Freemen to inquire of the cause and manner of their death, and shall present as true verdict thereof to some near Assistant, or the next Court to be held for that town, upon their oath.

65. No custom or prescription shall ever prevail amongst us in any moral cause; our meaning is (there shall not be a custom which will) maintain anything that can be proved to be morally sinful by the word of God.