

Excerpts from:

**CONSTITUTION OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

WE, the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, grateful to Almighty God for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, and humbly invoking His guidance, do ordain and establish this Constitution.

Article I

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

That the general, great and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and unalterably established, WE DECLARE THAT -

Inherent Rights of Mankind

Section 1.

All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and indefeasible rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own happiness.

Political Powers

Section 2.

All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness. For the advancement of these ends they have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think proper.

Religious Freedom

Section 3.

All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship or to maintain any ministry against his consent; no human authority can, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience, and no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious establishments or modes of worship.

Sections 4 and 5.

Omitted.

Trial by Jury

Section 6.

Trial by jury shall be as heretofore, and the right thereof remain inviolate. The General assembly may provide, however, by law, that a verdict may be rendered by not less than five-sixths of the jury in any civil case.

Freedom of Press and Speech; Libels

Section 7.

The printing press shall be free to every person who may undertake to examine the proceedings of the Legislature or any branch of government, and no law shall ever be made to restrain the right thereof. The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the invaluable rights of man, and every citizen may freely speak, write and print on any subject,

being responsible for the abuse of that liberty. No conviction shall be had in any prosecution for the publication of papers relating to the official conduct of officers or men in public capacity, or to any other matter proper for public investigation or information, where the fact that such publication was not maliciously or negligently made shall be established to the satisfaction of the jury; and in all indictments for libels the jury shall have the right to determine the law and the facts, under the direction of the court, as in other cases.

Section 8.

Omitted.

Rights of Accused in Criminal Prosecutions

Section 9.

In all criminal prosecutions the accused hath a right to be heard by himself and his counsel, to demand the nature and cause of the accusation against him, to meet the witnesses face to face, to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and in prosecutions by indictment or information, a speedy public trial by an impartial jury of the vicinage; he cannot be compelled to give evidence against himself, nor can he be deprived of his life, liberty or property, unless by the judgment of his peers or the law of the land. ...

Section 10.

Omitted.

Courts to Be Open; Suits Against the Commonwealth

Section 11.

All courts shall be open; and every man for an injury done him in his lands, goods, person or reputation shall have remedy by due course of law, and right and justice administered without sale, denial or delay. Suits may be brought against the Commonwealth in such manner, in such courts and in such cases as the Legislature may by law direct.

Section 12.

Omitted.

Bail, Fines and Punishments

Section 13.

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel punishments inflicted.

Section 14.

Omitted.

Special Criminal Tribunals

Section 15.

No commission shall issue creating special temporary criminal tribunals to try particular individuals or particular classes of cases.

Insolvent Debtors

Section 16.

The person of a debtor, where there is not strong presumption of fraud, shall not be continued in prison after delivering up his estate for the benefit of his creditors in such manner as shall be prescribed by law.

Ex Post Facto Laws; Impairment of Contracts

Section 17.

No ex post facto law, nor any law impairing the obligation of contracts, or making irrevocable any grant of special privileges or immunities, shall be passed.

Article VI
PUBLIC OFFICERS

Selection of Officers Not Otherwise Provided for in Constitution

Section 1.

All officers, whose selection is not provided for in this Constitution, shall be elected or appointed as may be directed by law.

Section 2. Omitted.

Oath of Office

Section 3.

Senators, Representatives and all judicial, State and county officers shall, before entering on the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe the following oath or affirmation before a person authorized to administer oaths.

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, obey and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this Commonwealth and that I will discharge the duties of my office with fidelity."

The oath or affirmation shall be administered to a member of the Senate or to a member of the House of Representatives in the hall of the House to which he shall have been elected. Any person refusing to take the oath or affirmation shall forfeit his office.

Power of Impeachment

Section 4.

The House of Representatives shall have the sole power of impeachment.

Trial of Impeachments

Section 5.

All impeachments shall be tried by the Senate. When sitting for that purpose the Senators shall be upon oath or affirmation. No person shall be convicted without the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.

Officers Liable to Impeachment

Section 6.

The Governor and all other civil officers shall be liable to impeachment for any misbehavior in office, but judgment in such cases shall not extend further than to removal from office and disqualification to hold any office of trust or profit under this Commonwealth. The person accused, whether convicted or acquitted, shall nevertheless be liable to indictment, trial, judgment and punishment according to law.

Removal of Civil Officers

Section 7.

All civil officers shall hold their offices on the condition that they behave themselves well while in office, and shall be removed on conviction of misbehavior in office or of any infamous crime. ... Remainder of this section **Omitted.**