

Article - Declaration of Rights

§1.

That all Government of right originates from the People, is founded in compact only, and instituted solely for the good of the whole; and they have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their Form of Government in such manner as they may deem expedient.

§2.

The Constitution of the United States, and the Laws made, or which shall be made, in pursuance thereof, and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, are, and shall be the Supreme Law of the State; and the Judges of this State, and all the People of this State, are, and shall be bound thereby; anything in the Constitution or Law of this State to the contrary notwithstanding.

§3.

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution thereof, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people thereof.

§4.

That the People of this State have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police thereof, as a free, sovereign and independent State.

§5.

(a) (1) That the Inhabitants of Maryland are entitled to the Common Law of England, and the trial by Jury, according to the course of that Law, and to the benefit of such of the English statutes as existed on the Fourth day of July, seventeen hundred and seventy-six; and which, by experience, have been found applicable to their local and other circumstances, and have been introduced, used and practiced by the Courts of Law or Equity; and also of all Acts of Assembly in force on the first day of June, eighteen hundred and sixty-seven; except such as may have since expired, or may be inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution; subject, nevertheless, to the revision of, and amendment or repeal by, the Legislature of this State. And the Inhabitants of Maryland are also entitled to all property derived to them from, or under the Charter granted by His Majesty Charles the First to Caecilius Calvert, Baron of Baltimore.

(2) Legislation may be enacted that limits the right to trial by jury in civil proceedings to those proceedings in which the amount in controversy exceeds \$25,000.

(b) The parties to any civil proceeding in which the right to a jury trial is preserved are entitled to a trial by jury of at least 6 jurors.

(c) That notwithstanding the Common Law of England, nothing in this Constitution prohibits trial by jury of less than 12 jurors in any civil proceeding in which the right to a jury trial is preserved.

§6.

That all persons invested with the Legislative or Executive powers of Government are the Trustees of the Public, and, as such, accountable for their conduct: Wherefore, whenever the ends of Government are perverted, and public liberty manifestly endangered, and all other means of redress are ineffectual, the People may, and of right ought, to reform the old, or establish a new Government; the doctrine of non-resistance against arbitrary power and oppression is absurd, slavish and destructive of the good and happiness of mankind.

§7.

That the right of the People to participate in the Legislature is the best security of liberty and the foundation of all free Government; for this purpose, elections ought to be free and frequent; and every citizen having the qualifications prescribed by the Constitution, ought to have the right of suffrage.

§8.

That the Legislative, Executive and Judicial powers of Government ought to be forever separate and distinct from each other; and no person exercising the functions of one of said Departments shall assume or discharge the duties of any other.

§9.

That no power of suspending Laws or the execution of Laws, unless by, or derived from the Legislature, ought to be exercised, or allowed.

§10.

That freedom of speech and debate, or proceedings in the Legislature, ought not to be impeached in any Court of Judicature.

§11.

That Annapolis be the place of meeting of the Legislature; and the Legislature ought not to be convened, or held at any other place but from evident necessity.

§12.

That for redress of grievances, and for amending, strengthening and preserving the Laws, the Legislature ought to be frequently convened.

§13.

That every man hath a right to petition the Legislature for the redress of grievances in a peaceable and orderly manner.

§14.

That no aid, charge, tax, burthen or fees ought to be rated or levied, under any pretense, without the consent of the Legislature.

§15.

That the levying of taxes by the poll is grievous and oppressive and ought to be prohibited; that paupers ought not to be assessed for the support of the government; that the General Assembly shall, by uniform rules, provide for the separate assessment, classification and sub-classification of land, improvements on land and personal property, as it may deem proper; and all taxes thereafter provided to be levied by the State for the support of the general State Government, and by the Counties and by the City of Baltimore for their respective purposes, shall be uniform within each class or sub-class of land, improvements on land and personal property which the respective taxing powers may have directed to be subjected to the tax levy; yet fines, duties or taxes may properly and justly be imposed, or laid with a political view for the good government and benefit of the community.

§16.

That sanguinary Laws ought to be avoided as far as it is consistent with the safety of the State; and no Law to inflict cruel and unusual pains and penalties ought to be made in any case, or at any time, hereafter.

§17.

That retrospective Laws, punishing acts committed before the existence of such Laws, and by them only declared criminal are oppressive, unjust and incompatible with liberty; wherefore, no ex post facto Law ought to be made; nor any retrospective oath or restriction be imposed, or required.

§18.

That no Law to attain particular persons of treason or felony, ought to be made in any case, or at any time, hereafter.

§19.

That every man, for any injury done to him in his person or property, ought to have remedy by the course of the Law of the Land, and ought to have justice and right, freely without sale, fully without any denial, and speedily without delay, according to the Law of the Land.

§20.

That the trial of facts, where they arise, is one of the greatest securities of the lives, liberties and estate of the People.

§21.

That in all criminal prosecutions, every man hath a right to be informed of the accusation against him; to have a copy of the Indictment, or charge, in due time (if required) to prepare for his defence; to be allowed counsel; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have process for his witnesses; to examine the witnesses for and against him on oath; and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury, without whose unanimous consent he ought not to be found guilty.

§22.

That no man ought to be compelled to give evidence against himself in a criminal case.

§23.

In the trial of all criminal cases, the Jury shall be the Judges of Law, as well as of fact, except that the Court may pass upon the sufficiency of the evidence to sustain a conviction.

The right of trial by Jury of all issues of fact in civil proceedings in the several Courts of Law in this State, where the amount in controversy exceeds the sum of \$25,000, shall be inviolably preserved.

§24.

That no man ought to be taken or imprisoned or disseized of his freehold, liberties or privileges, or outlawed, or exiled, or, in any manner, destroyed, or deprived of his life, liberty or property, but by the judgment of his peers, or by the Law of the land.

§25.

That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishment inflicted, by the Courts of Law.

§26.

That all warrants, without oath or affirmation, to search suspected places, or to seize any person or property, are grievous and oppressive; and all general warrants to search suspected places, or to apprehend suspected persons, without naming or describing the place, or the person in special, are illegal, and ought not to be granted.

§27.

That no conviction shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture of estate.

§28.

That a well regulated Militia is the proper and natural defence of a free Government.

§29.

That standing Armies are dangerous to liberty, and ought not to be raised, or kept up, without the consent of the Legislature.

§30.

That in all cases, and at all times, the military ought to be under strict subordination to, and control of, the civil power.

§31.

That no soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, except in the manner prescribed by Law.

§32.

That no person except regular soldiers, marines, and mariners in the service of this State, or militia, when in actual service, ought, in any case, to be subject to, or punishable by Martial Law.

§33.

That the independency and uprightness of Judges are essential to the impartial administration of Justice, and a great security to the rights and liberties of the People: Wherefore, the Judges shall not be removed, except in the manner, and for the causes provided in this Constitution. No Judge shall hold any other office, civil or military, or political trust, or employment of any kind, whatsoever, under the Constitution or Laws of this State, or of the United States, or any of them; except that a Judge may be a member of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States or a member of the militia of the United States or this State; or receive fees, or perquisites of any kind, for the discharge of his official duties.

§34.

That a long continuance in the Executive Departments of power or trust is dangerous to liberty; a rotation, therefore, in those departments is one of the best securities of permanent freedom.

§35.

That no person shall hold, at the same time, more than one office of profit, created by the Constitution or Laws of this State; nor shall any person in public trust receive any present from any foreign Prince or State, or from the United States, or any of them, without the approbation of this State. The position of Notary Public shall not be considered an office of profit within the meaning of this Article. Nonelected membership in the militia of this State, a law enforcement agency, a fire department or agency, or a rescue squad shall not be considered an office of profit within the meaning of this Article; nor shall any remuneration received as a consequence of membership in a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States or of membership in the militia of the United States or of this State be considered a present within the meaning of this Article.

§36.

That as it is the duty of every man to worship God in such manner as he thinks most acceptable to Him, all persons are equally entitled to protection in their religious liberty; wherefore, no person ought by any law to be molested in his person or estate, on account of his religious persuasion, or profession, or for his religious practice, unless, under the color of religion, he shall disturb the good order, peace or safety of the State, or shall infringe the laws of morality, or injure others in their natural, civil or religious rights; nor ought any person to be compelled to frequent, or maintain, or contribute, unless on contract, to maintain, any place of worship, or any ministry; nor shall any person, otherwise competent, be deemed incompetent as a witness, or juror, on account of his religious belief, provided, he believes in the existence of God, and that under His dispensation such person will be held morally accountable for his acts, and be rewarded or punished therefor either in this world or in the world to come.

Nothing shall prohibit or require the making reference to belief in, reliance upon, or invoking the aid of God or a Supreme Being in any governmental or public document, proceeding, activity, ceremony, school, institution, or place.

Nothing in this article shall constitute an establishment of religion.

§37.

That no religious test ought ever to be required as a qualification for any office of profit or trust in this State, other than a declaration of belief in the existence of God; nor shall the Legislature prescribe any other oath of office than the oath prescribed by this Constitution.

§39.

That the manner of administering an oath or affirmation to any person, ought to be such as those of the religious persuasion, profession, or denomination, of which he is a member, generally esteem the most effectual confirmation by the attestation of the Divine Being.

§40.

That the liberty of the press ought to be inviolably preserved; that every citizen of the State ought to be allowed to speak, write and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that privilege.

§41.

That monopolies are odious, contrary to the spirit of a free government and the principles of commerce, and ought not to be suffered.

§42.

That no title of nobility or hereditary honors ought to be granted in this State.

§43.

That the Legislature ought to encourage the diffusion of knowledge and virtue, the extension of a judicious system of general education, the promotion of literature, the arts, sciences, agriculture, commerce and manufactures, and the general melioration of the condition of the People. The Legislature may provide that land actively devoted to farm or agricultural use shall be assessed on the basis of such use and shall not be assessed as if sub-divided.

§44.

That the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, and of this State, apply, as well in time of war, as in time of peace; and any departure therefrom, or violation thereof, under the plea of necessity, or any other plea, is subversive of good Government, and tends to anarchy and despotism.

§45.

This enumeration of Rights shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the People.

§46.

Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged or denied because of sex.

§47.

(a) A victim of crime shall be treated by agents of the State with dignity, respect, and sensitivity during all phases of the criminal justice process.

(b) In a case originating by indictment or information filed in a circuit court, a victim of crime shall have the right to be informed of the rights established in this Article and, upon request and if practicable, to be notified of, to attend, and to be heard at a criminal justice proceeding, as these rights are implemented and the terms “crime”, “criminal justice proceeding”, and “victim” are specified by law.

(c) Nothing in this Article permits any civil cause of action for monetary damages for violation of any of its provisions or authorizes a victim of crime to take any action to stay a criminal justice proceeding.

§Article 48. NOT IN EFFECT

** SUBJECT TO REFERENDUM NOVEMBER 2024 – CHAPTERS 244 AND 245 OF 2023 **

That every person, as a central component of an individual's rights to liberty and equality, has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end one's own pregnancy. The State may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling State interest achieved by the least restrictive means.