

Inhabitants of Fauquier County, Petition Against Taxes to Support the Church, 1785 Transcription (page 1 of 3)

To the Honourable the General Assembly of the State of Virginia, the Petition of the underwritten Inhabitants of the said State.

Humbly sheweth.

That your petitioners are persuaded that Religion is of the Highest Moment and greatest Importance to Mankind; That its Transcendant superiority in doing good exceeds all Comparisons: But they're at the same time persuaded that no Taxes or Confiscations or Compulsions of any Kind have ever promoted its Glorious Cause: That the Saviour of the World and his Apostles have not directly or Indirectly any such method for the Propagation¹ of Truth, but on the contrary by example as well as Precept have proceeded in a different manner: That it has been universally allowed by Writers on the subject, That Religion flourished among the primitive Christians more than it has ever since, thou' they derived no support from the Civil Powers: That the faithfull Ministers of the different denominations who have a great Zeal for the welfare of Mankind, are contented with the free-will offerings of the People, and none but the Ambitious, the lazy, the luxurious² Ministers who labour (if it can be called Labour) merely for Gold and not for the Good of their Fellow creatures, have need of compulsive Measures for their support: That the State will be abundantly happier, and its Members more virtuous, without those Ministers who fleece³ but watch not over the Flock than with them: That we cannot expect, after the Convulsions⁴ the state has experienced by its glorious and successful Struggle for Liberty, every thing to be Instantaneously in its most perfect State; but in the Course of Providence we doubt not that a sufficient Number of faithful Ministers will be raised, Men who seek not power and Riches, but the welfare of Mankind; That one great Advantage, among many, of the Revolution has been the Expulsion of most of those Hirelings⁵ who got into the Priest's Office merely out of Temporal⁶ Motives; And therefore, that We humbly entreat and most earnestly pray and beseech the Honourable the Assembly that compulsive Measures may not be used for the Support of a lazy, indolent⁷ Clergy, (for we are conscious that faithful Ministers want no Support of the kind) and consequently that no, no Assessment⁸ on account of Religion may take place.

And your Petitioners, as in Duty bound, shall pray, &c

¹ Propagation: spread

⁵ Hirelings: appointees

² Luxurious: materialistic

⁶ Temporal: earthly

³ Fleece: steal from

⁷ Indolent: avoiding exertion

⁴ Convulsions: struggles

⁸ Assessment: tax

Inhabitants of Fauquier County, Petition Against Taxes to Support the Church, 1785 Transcription (page 2 of 3)

Saml Watson	George Glendening	George Wheatley	James Collins
Reuben Bramlet	John Stephenson	Wm Herndon	Benjn Holtzclaw
Wm Kitson	John Green	Wm Suttle	Edward [illegible]
John Martin	Charles [illegible]	Henry Thornberry	Ninnan Wyse
W Williams	Joseph [illegible]	James Withers	George Green
Charles [Colvin?]	Samuel Fisher	Elias Martin	Charles Martin
James Routt	Arthur Gladston	Jacob Coons	John Hammer
Jacob Burger	John Martin	John Woodside	James [illegible]
Daniel Wheatley	John Wever	John Mcdannal	Robert Turnbull
Alexdr Williamson	Nathan Bramlet	George Williams	Benjamin Arnold
Hezekiah Freeman	James Wheatley	Charles Ayres	George Eastham
John Bramlet	George Green	Vincen[t] Tap[p]	Daniel Hitt
Augustine Jennings	William Porter	Charles Ficklen	William Russell
Wm Bryans	[Nimrod Foster?]	Tunis Johnson	Harmon Hitt
Benjamin Dodd	Ralph Hughs	William Suttle	Benjamin Garner
John Mizner	James Stevenson	John Jett	Wm Gibson
Stephen Lee Junr [junior]	Louis Jennings	James Kirk	Martin Hitt
Cornelius Hall	James Dodd	[Hezekiah] Oliver	Joseph Russell
Josiah Holtzclaw	Harmon [Prack?]	Leven Oliver	Reuben Wright
John Hitt	Moses Tapp	Thomas Graves	Nicholas Wyckoff
Charles Utterback	Jesse Green	Wm Powell Jr.	Jacob Button
Joseph Wheatley	Yellis Johnson	Wm Powell Senr	Fielding Turner
Wm Duff	Baylor Jennings	Reuben Strother	William Gibson
Joseph Duncan	Nathaniel Dodd	Thomas Townes	Tapley Hinson
Ninnan Wyse	Issachar Pawling	Jeremiah Williams	[illegible]
James Duff	Richard Fisher	Jos. Martin	John [illegible]

*Citation: Petition of the Inhabitants of Fauquier County, Fauquier County, 1785, Legislative Petitions
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**Inhabitants of Fauquier County, Petition Against Taxes to
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Jesse Hitt
Benj. Hitt
William Harris
Aaron Hitt
Tho. Maddus
Saml Pepper
John James
Peter Kamper
Henry Coons
Benjamin [illegible]
Samuel Pettit
Benjamin Morgan
John Crockett
Alex. [Longstreet?]
[illegible]
Solo. Kemper
Martin Edwards
Thomas Pettit
John Parker
Peter Hitt
Jordan Suttle
Humphrey Arnold
Archibald Shaw

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