The Virginia Declaration of Rights, June 12, 1776

Citation: George Mason, Declaration of Rights, 1776, Accession 21512, Personal Papers Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.
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8. That in all capital or criminal prosecutions, a man hath a right to demand a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of his peers, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation. He can not be condemned twice for one and the same offence.

9. That excessive fines, bail, and punishments should not be inflicted.

10. That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, the ancient right of trial by jury is preferable to any other, and ought to be preserved.

11. That the freedom of the press is one of the bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic government.

12. That a well regulated militia, composed of the body of the people trained to arms, is the proper, natural, and safe defense of a free state; that standing armies, in time of peace, should be avoided, as dangerous to liberty; and that, in all cases, the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.

13. That no free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved by people but by a firm adherence to justice.

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Justice, moderation, temperance, frugality & virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

14. That Religion, or the Duty which is owed to our Creator, and the Manner of its discharge, if it can be directed only by

Treason or conviction, and not by Force or Violence, and that

all Men should enjoy the fullest Toleration in the

exercise of Religion according to the dictates of良心

unpunished, unrestrained by the Magistrate, unless public

orders or the safety of Society: and that the mutual duty

fall to practice Christian Tolerance, Love & Charity

towards each other.

This Declaration of Rights was adopted in America; it received for alterations.

Additions in the Virginia Convention, some of them not for the better, and some

as close as imitation to the other United States.

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