

*Petition of James, November 30, 1786, New Kent County, Legislative Petitions  
of the General Assembly, 1776-1865, Accession 36121, Library of Virginia.*

To the honorable the Speaker & gentlemen of the Genl. Assembly

The petition of James (a slave belonging to Will: Armistead of New Kent county) humbly sheweth: That your petitioner persuaded of the just right which all mankind have to Freedom, notwithstanding his own state of bondage, with an honest desire to serve this country in its defence thereof did, during the ravages of Lord Cornwallis thro' this state by the permission of his master, enter into the service of the Marquiss Lafayette. That during the time of his serving the Marquiss he often at the peril of his life found means to frequent the British Camp by which means he kept open a channel of the most useful communication to the army of the state. That at different times your petitioner conveyed inclosures from the Marquiss in to the Enemies lines, of the most secret & important kind; the possession of which if discovered on him would have most certainly endangered the life of your petitioner. That he undertook & performed all commands with chearfulness & fidelity in opposition to the persuasion & example of many thousands of his unfortunate condition. For proof of the above your petitioner begs leave to refer to Certificate of the Marquiss Lafayette hereto annexed, & after taking his case as here stated into consideration he humbly intreats that he may be granted that Freedom, which he flatters himself he has in some degree contributed to establish; & which he hopes always to prove himself worthy of; nor does he desire even this inestimable favor unless his present master from whom he has experienced every thing which can make tolerable the state of slavery, shall be made adequate compensation for the loss of a valuable workman, which your petitioner humbly requests may be done & Your petitioner shall ever pray &c.

[*Docket:*]

James's Peto

Novr 30th 1786

refd to props [referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances]

(reasonable)

repd

Executive to Etc.

bill