

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY. PREAMBLE. We, the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties we enjoy and invoking the continuance of these blessings, do ordain and establish this Constitution. BILL OF RIGHTS The great and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established We Declare that: SECTION 1. All men are, by nature, free and equal, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights, among which may be reckoned: First: The right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties. Second: The right of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of their consciences. Third: The right of seeking and pursuing their safety and happiness. Fourth: The right of freely communicating their thoughts and opinions. Fifth: The right of acquiring and protecting property. Sixth: The right of assembling together in a peaceable manner for their common good, and of applying to those invested with the power of government for redress of grievances or other proper purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance. Seventh: The right to bear arms in defense of themselves and of the State, subject to the power of the General Assembly to enact laws to prevent persons from carrying concealed weapons. SEC. 2. Absolute and arbitrary power over the lives, liberty and property of freemen exists nowhere in a republic, not even in the largest majority. SEC. 3. All men, when they form a social compact, are equal; and no grant of exclusive, separate public emoluments or privileges shall be made to any man or set of men, except in consideration of public services; but no property shall be exempt from taxation except as provided in this Constitution, and every grant of a franchise, privilege or exemption, shall remain subject to revocation, alteration or amendment. SEC. 4. All power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their peace, safety, happiness and the protection of property. 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 deem proper. SEC. 5. No preference shall ever be given by law to any religion, sect, society or denomination, nor to any particular creed, mode of worship or system of ecclesiastical polity, nor shall any person be compelled to attend any place of worship, to contribute to the erection or maintenance of any such place, or to the salary or support of any minister or religion; nor shall any man be compelled to send his child to any school to which he may be conscientiously opposed; and the civil rights, privileges or capacities of no person shall be taken away, or in any way diminished or enlarged, on account of his belief or disbelief of any religious tenet, dogma or teaching. No human authority shall, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience. SEC. 6. All elections shall be free and equal. SEC. 7. The ancient mode of trial by jury shall be held sacred, and the right thereof remain inviolate, subject to such modifications as may be authorized by this Constitution. SEC. 8. Printing presses shall be free to every person who undertakes to examine the proceedings of the General Assembly or any branch of government, and no law shall ever be made to restrain the right thereof. Every person may freely and fully speak write and print on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty. SEC. 9. In prosecutions for the publication of papers investigating the official conduct of officers or men in a public capacity, or where the matter published is proper for public information, the truth thereof may be given in evidence; and in all indictments for libel the jury shall have the right to determine the law and the facts, under the direction of the court, as in other cases. SEC. 10. The people shall be secure in their persons, houses, papers and possessions, from unreasonable search and seizure; and no warrant shall issue to search any place, or seize any person or thing, without describing them as nearly as may be, nor without probable cause supported by oath or affirmation. SEC. 11. In all criminal prosecutions the accused has the right to be heard by himself and counsel; to demand the nature and cause of the accusation against him; to meet the witnesses face to face, and to have a compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor. He can not 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; and in prosecutions by indictment or information, he shall have a speedy public trial by an impartial jury of the vicinage; but the General Assembly may provide by general law for a change of venue in such prosecutions for both the defendant and the Commonwealth, the change to be made to the most convenient county in which a fair trial can be obtained. SEC. 12. No person, for an indictable offense, shall be proceeded against criminally by information, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger, or by leave of court for oppression or misdemeanor in office. SEC. 13. No person shall, for the same offense, be twice put in jeopardy of his life or limb, nor shall any man's property be taken or applied to public use without the consent of his representatives, and without just compensation being previously made to him. SEC. 14. All courts shall be open and every person 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. SEC. 15. No power to suspend laws shall be exercised, unless by the General Assembly or its authority. SEC. 16. All prisoners shall be bailable by sufficient securities, unless for capital offenses when the proof is evident or the presumption great; and the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus shall not be suspended unless when, in case of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it. SEC. 17. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel punishment inflicted. SEC. 18. The power of the General Assembly shall not be extended to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. SEC. 19. No ex post facto law, nor any law impairing the obligation of contracts, shall be enacted. SEC. 20. No person shall be attainted of treason or felony by the General Assembly, and no attainer shall work corruption of blood, nor, except during the life of the offender, forfeiture of estate to the Commonwealth. SEC. 21. The estate of such persons as shall destroy their own lives shall descend or vest as in cases of natural death; and if any person shall be killed by casualty, there shall be no forfeiture by reason thereof. SEC. 22. No standing army shall, in time of peace, be maintained without the consent of the General Assembly; and the military shall, in all cases and at all times, be in strict subordination to the civil power; nor shall any soldier, in time of peace, be quartered in any house without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, except in a manner prescribed by law. SEC. 23. The General Assembly shall not grant any title of nobility or hereditary distinction, nor create any office, the appointment of which shall be for a longer time than a term of years. SEC. 24. Emigration from the State shall not be prohibited. SEC. 25. Slavery and involuntary servitude in this State are forbidden, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. SEC. 26. To guard against transgression of the high powers which we have delegated, WE DECLARE that every thing in this Bill of Rights is excepted out of the general powers of government, and shall forever remain inviolate; and all laws contrary thereto, or contrary to this Constitution, shall be void. DISTRIBUTION OF THE POWERS OF GOVERNMENT SEC. 27. The powers of the government of the Commonwealth of Kentucky shall be divided into three distinct departments, and each of them be confined to a separate body of magistracy, to-wit: Those which are legislative, to one; those which are executive, to another; and those which are judicial, to another. SEC. 28. No person or collection of persons, being of one of those departments, shall exercise any power properly belonging either of the others, except in the instances hereinafter expressly directed or permitted. LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT SEC. 29. The legislative power shall be vested in a House of Representatives and a Senate, which, together, shall be styled the "General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky." SEC. 30. Members of the House of Representatives and Senators elected at the August election in one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one, and Senators then holding over, shall continue in office until and including the last day of December, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three. Thereafter the term of office of Representatives and Senators shall begin upon the first day of January of the year in which they are elected. SEC. 31. At the general election in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-three one Senator shall be elected in each Senatorial District, and one Representative in each Representative District. The Senators then elected shall hold their offices, one-half for two years and one-half for four years, as shall be determined by lot at the first election. The Representatives shall hold their offices, one-half for two years and one-half for four years, as shall be determined by lot at the first election. The term of office of each Representative shall be for two years. SEC. 32. No person shall be elected to either office who, at the time of his election, is not a citizen of Kentucky, has not attained the age of twenty-four years, and who has not resided in this State two years next preceding his election, and the Representative who, at the time of his election, is not a citizen of Kentucky, has not attained the age of thirty years, and has not resided in this State six years next preceding his election, and the last year thereof in the district for which he may be chosen. SEC. 33. The Representatives and Senators shall be chosen by the people of the Commonwealth, and the Representatives shall be chosen by the people of the several districts, as nearly equal in population as may be without dividing any county, except where a county may include more than one district, which districts shall constitute the Senatorial and Representative districts, and the Representatives shall be chosen by the people of the several districts, as nearly equal in population as may be without dividing any county, except where a county may include more than one district, which districts shall constitute the Senatorial and Representative districts, and the Representatives shall be chosen by the people of the several districts, as nearly equal in population as may be without dividing any county, except where a county may include more than one district, which districts shall constitute the Senatorial and Representative districts, and the Representatives shall be chosen by the people of the 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