

# THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE STAMP ACT CONGRESS

OCTOBER 19, 1765<sup>1</sup>

1 { [On the motion of James Otis, on June 8, the Massachusetts legislature sent a circular inviting all the colonies to send delegates to a congress at New York in October, 1765. Representatives from only nine colonies appeared. Virginia, New Hampshire, North Carolina, and Georgia were not represented. The Congress agreed upon the Declaration of Rights reproduced here and, further, petitioned the king and Parliament. Because the credentials of certain delegates authorized them merely to consult and not to take action, the petition was signed by the members of only six colonies.]

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*Saturday, Oct. 19th, 1765, A.M.* -- The congress met according to adjournment, and resumed, etc., as yesterday; and upon mature deliberation, agreed to the following declaration of the rights and grievances of the colonists in America, which were ordered to be inserted.

## DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

2 The members of this congress, sincerely devoted, with the warmest sentiments of affection and duty to His Majesty's person and government, inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the Protestant succession, and with minds deeply impressed by a sense of the present and impending misfortunes of the British colonies on this continent; having considered as maturely as time would permit, the circumstances of said colonies, esteem it our indispensable duty to make the following declarations, of our humble opinions, respecting the most essential rights and liberties of the colonists, and of the grievances under which they labor, by reason of several late acts of Parliament.

3 { 1st. That His Majesty's subjects in these colonies owe the same allegiance to the crown of Great Britain that is owing from his subjects born within the realm, and all due subordination to that august body, the Parliament of Great Britain.

3 { 2d. That His Majesty's liege subjects in these colonies are entitled to all the inherent rights and privileges of his natural born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain.

4 3d. That it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted rights of Englishmen, that no taxes should be imposed on them, but with their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.

5 Lastly, That it is the indispensable duty of these colonies to the best of sovereigns, to the mother-country, and to themselves, to endeavor, by a loyal and dutiful address to His Majesty, and humble application to both houses of Parliament, to procure the repeal of the act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, of all clauses of any other acts of Parliament whereby the jurisdiction of the admiralty is extended as aforesaid, and of the other late acts for the restriction of the American commerce.

Stamp Act Congress

Primary Source

Section 1.

1. When was this document written?
2. What is the job of the Massachusetts legislature? What does this legislature do in October 1765?
3. What do you think the term delegates means?

Section 2.

4. What are the "several late acts of Parliament"?

Section 3.

5. How do the colonists want to be treated?

Section 4.

6. What do you think the term consent means?
7. What are the colonists complaining about in this section? (Summarize their complaint)

Section 5.

8. What do the colonists ask King George III and Parliament to do in this section?