

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

THE STATE OF TEXAS

ADOPTED BY THE

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

CONVENED AT AUSTIN. SEPTEMBER 6, 1875, AND
RATIFIED BY THE PEOPLE
FEBRUARY 15, 1876.

HOUSTON
1876

CONSTITUTION.

PREAMBLE.

Humbly invoking the blessing of Almighty God, the people of the State of Texas do ordain and establish this Constitution.

ARTICLE I.

Bill of Rights.

That the general, great and essential principles of liberty and free government may be recognized and established, we declare:

Section 1. Texas is a free and independent State, subject only to the Constitution of the United States; and the maintenance of our free institutions and the perpetuity of the Union depend upon the preservation of the right of local self-government unimpaired to all the States.

Sec. 2. All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit. The faith of the people of Texas stands pledged to the preservation of a republican form of government, and, subject to this limitation only, they have at all times the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their government in such manner as they may think expedient.

Sec. 3. All free men when they form a social compact, have equal rights, and no man, or set of men, is entitled to exclusive separate public emoluments, or privileges, but in consideration of public services.

Sec. 4. No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office, or public trust, in this State; nor shall any one be excluded from holding office on account of his religious sentiments, provided he acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being.

Sec. 5. No person shall be disqualified to give evidence in any of the courts of this State on account of his religious opinions, or for the want of any religious belief, but all oaths or affirmations shall be administered in the mode most bind-

ing upon the conscience, and shall be taken subject to the pains and penalties of perjury.

Sec. 6. All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences. No man shall be compelled to attend, erect or support any place of worship, or to maintain any ministry against his consent. No human authority ought, in any case whatever, to control or interfere with the rights of conscience in matters of religion, and no preference shall ever be given by law to any religious society or mode of worship. But it shall be the duty of the Legislature to pass such laws as may be necessary to protect equally every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship.

Sec. 7. No money shall be appropriated or drawn from the treasury for the benefit of any sect, or religious society, theological or religious seminary; nor shall property belonging to the State be appropriated for any such purposes.

Sec. 8. Every person shall be at liberty to speak, write or publish his opinions on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that privilege; and no law shall ever be passed curtailing the liberty of speech or of the press. In prosecutions for the publication of papers investigating the conduct of officers or men in public capacity, or when the matter published is proper for public information, the truth thereof may be given in evidence. And in all indictments for libels the jury shall have the right to determine the law and the facts, under the direction of the court, as in other cases.

Sec. 9. The people shall be secure in their persons, houses, papers and possessions from all unreasonable seizures or searches, and no warrant to search any place, or to seize any person or thing, shall issue without describing them as near as may be, nor without probable cause supported by oath or affirmation.

Sec. 10. In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall have a speedy public trial by an impartial jury. He shall have the right to demand the nature and cause of the accusation against him, and have a copy thereof. He shall not be compelled to give evidence against himself. He shall have the right of being heard by himself or counsel or both: shall be confronted with the witnesses against him, and shall have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor. And no person shall be held to answer for a criminal offense, unless on indictment of a grand jury, except in cases in which the punishment is by fine, or imprisonment otherwise than in the penitentiary, in cases of impeachment, and in cases

arising in the army or navy, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger.

Sec. 11. All prisoners shall be bailable by sufficient sureties, unless for capital offenses when the proof is evident; but this provision shall not be so construed as to prevent bail after indictment found, upon examination of the evidence in such manner as may be prescribed by law.

Sec. 12. The writ of habeas corpus is a writ of right, and shall never be suspended. The Legislature shall enact laws to render the remedy speedy and effectual.

Sec. 13. Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel or unusual punishment inflicted. 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.

Sec. 14. No person, for the same offense, shall be twice put in jeopardy of life or liberty; nor shall a person be again put upon trial for the same offense after a verdict of not guilty in a court of competent jurisdiction.

Sec. 15. The right of trial by jury shall remain inviolate. The Legislature shall pass such laws as may be needed to regulate the same, and to maintain its purity and efficiency.

Sec. 16. No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, retroactive law, or any law impairing the obligation of contracts, shall be made.

Sec. 17. No person's property shall be taken, damaged or destroyed for or applied to public use without adequate compensation being made, unless by the consent of such person; and, when taken, except for the use of the state, such compensation shall be first made, or secured by a deposit of money; and no irrevocable or uncontrollable grant of special privileges or immunities shall be made; but all privileges and franchises granted by the Legislature or created under its authority shall be subject to the control thereof.

Sec. 18. No person shall ever be imprisoned for debt.

Sec. 19. No citizen of this State shall be deprived of life, liberty, property, privileges or immunities, or in any manner disfranchised, except by the due course of the law of the land.

Sec. 20. No person shall be outlawed; nor shall any person be transported out of the State for any offense committed within the same.

Sec. 21. No conviction shall work corruption of blood, or forfeiture of estate; and the estates of those who destroy their own lives shall descend or vest as in case of natural death.

Sec. 22. Treason against the State shall consist only in

levying war against it, or adhering to its enemies, giving them aid and comfort; and no person shall be convicted of treason except on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court.

Sec. 23. Every citizen shall have the right to keep and bear arms in the lawful defense of himself or the State; but the Legislature shall have power by law to regulate the wearing of arms with a view to prevent crime.

Sec. 24. The military shall at all times be subordinate to the civil authority.

Sec. 25. No soldier shall in time of peace be quartered in the house of any citizen without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war but in a manner prescribed by law.

Sec. 26. Perpetuities and monopolies are contrary to the genius of a free government, and shall never be allowed; nor shall the law of primogeniture or entailments ever be in force in this State.

Sec. 27. The citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good, and apply to those invested with the power of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address or remonstrance.

Sec. 28. No power of suspending laws in this State shall be exercised except by the Legislature.

Sec. 29. To guard against transgressions of the high powers herein delegated, we declare that everything 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 to the following provisions, shall be void.

ARTICLE II.

The Powers of Government.

Section 1. The powers of the government of the State of Texas shall be divided into three distinct departments, each of which shall be confided 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; and no person, or collection of persons, being of one of these departments, shall exercise any power properly attached to either of the others, except in the instances herein expressly permitted.