

*The*  
**DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**  
*and the*  
**CONSTITUTION**  
*of the*  
**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
*as amended through May, 1955*

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

We the representatives of the people of the Commonwealth of Liberia, in Convention assembled, invested with authority for forming a new government, relying upon the aid and protection of the Great Arbiter of human events, do hereby, in the name, and on the behalf of the people of this Commonwealth, publish and declare the said Commonwealth a FREE, SOVEREIGN, AND INDEPENDENT STATE, by the name and title of the REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

While announcing to the nations of the world the new position which the people of this Republic have felt themselves called upon to assume, courtesy to their opinion seems to demand a brief accompanying statement of the causes which induced them, first to expatriate themselves from the land of their nativity and to form settlements on this barbarous coast, and now to organize their government by the assumption of a sovereign and independent character. Therefore we respectfully ask their attention to the following facts.

We recognise in all men, certain natural and inalienable rights: among these are life, liberty, and the right to acquire, possess, enjoy and defend property. By the practice and consent of men in all ages, some system or form of government is proven to be necessary to exercise, enjoy and secure those rights; and every people have a right to institute a government, and to choose and adopt that system or form of it, which in their opinion will most effectually accomplish these objects, and secure their happiness, which does not interfere with the just rights of others. The right therefore to institute government, and to all the powers necessary to conduct it, is, an inalienable right, and cannot be resisted without the grossest injustice.

We the people of the Republic of Liberia were originally the inhabitants of the United States of North America.

In some parts of that country, we were debarred by law from all the rights and privileges of men—in other parts, public sentiment, more powerful than law, frowned us down.

We were every where shut out from all civil office.

We were excluded from all participation in the government.

We were taxed without our consent.

We were compelled to contribute to the resources of a country, which gave us no protection.

We were made a separate and distinct class, and against us every avenue to improvement was effectually closed. Strangers from all lands of a color different from ours, were preferred before us.

We uttered our complaints, but they were unattended to, or only met by alledging the peculiar institutions of the country.

All hope of a favorable change in our country was thus wholly extinguished in our bosoms, and we looked with anxiety abroad for some asylum from the deep degradation.

The Western coast of Africa was the place selected by American benevolence and philanthropy, for our future home. Removed beyond those influences which depressed us in our native land, it was hoped we would be enabled to enjoy those rights and privileges, and exercise and improve those faculties, which the God of nature has given us in common with the rest of mankind.

Under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, we established ourselves here, on land acquired by purchase from the Lords of the soil.

In an original compact with this Society, we, for important reasons delegated to it certain political powers; while this institution stipulated that whenever the people should become capable of conducting the government, or whenever the people should desire it, this institution would resign the delegated power, peaceably withdraw its supervision, and leave the people to the government of themselves.

Under the auspices and guidance of this institution, which has nobly and in perfect faith redeemed its pledges to the people, we have grown and prospered.

From time to time, our number has been increased by migration from America, and by accessions from native tribes; and from time to time, as circumstances required it, we have extended our

borders by acquisition of land by honorable purchase from the natives of the country.

As our territory has extended, and our population increased, our commerce has also increased. The flags of most of the civilized nations of the earth float in our harbors, and their merchants are opening an honorable and profitable trade. Until recently, these visits have been of a uniformly harmonious character, but as they have become more frequent, and to more numerous points of our extending coast, questions have arisen, which it is supposed can be adjusted only by agreement between sovereign powers.

For years past, the American Colonization Society has virtually withdrawn from all direct and active part in the administration of the government, except in the appointment of the Governor, who is also a colonist, for the apparent purpose of testing the ability of the people to conduct the affairs of government, and no complaint of crude legislation, nor of mismanagement, nor of mal-administration has yet been heard.

In view of these facts, this institution, the American Colonization Society, with that good faith which has uniformly marked all its dealings with us, by a set of resolutions in January, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-Six, dissolve all political connexion with the people of this Republic, return the power with which it was delegated, and left the people to the government of themselves.

The people of the Republic of Liberia then, are of right, and in fact, a free, sovereign and independent State; possessed of all the rights, powers, and functions of government.

In assuming the momentous responsibilities of the position they have taken, the people of this Republic, feel justified by the necessities of the case, and with this conviction they throw themselves with confidence upon the candid consideration of the civilized world.

Liberia is not the offspring of grasping ambition, nor the tool of avaricious speculation.

No desire for territorial aggrandizement brought us to these shores; nor do we believe so sordid a motive entered into the high considerations of those who aided us in providing this asylum.

Liberia is an asylum from the most grinding oppression.

In coming to the shores of Africa, we indulged the pleasing hope that we would be permitted to exercise and improve those faculties, which impart to man his dignity—to nourish in our

hearts the flame of honorable ambition, to cherish and indulge those aspirations, which a beneficent Creator had implanted in every human heart, and to evince to all who despise, ridicule and oppress our race, that we possess with them a common nature, are with them susceptible of equal refinement, and capable of equal advancement in all that adorns and dignifies man.

We were animated with the hope, that here we should be at liberty to train up our children in the way they should go—to inspire them with the love of an honorable fame, to kindle within them, the flame of a lofty philanthropy, and to form strong within them, the principles of humanity, virtue and religion.

Among the strongest motives to leave our native land—to abandon forever the scenes of our childhood, and to sever the most endeared connexions, was the desire for a retreat where, free from the agitations of fear and molestation, we could, in composure and security approach in worship, the God of our fathers.

Thus far our highest hopes have been realized.

Liberia is already the happy home of thousands, who were once the doomed victims of oppression, and if left unmolested to go on with her natural and spontaneous growth; if her movements be left free from the paralysing intrigues of jealous, ambitious, and unscrupulous avarice, she will throw open a wider and yet a wider door for thousands, who are now looking with an anxious eye for some land of rest.

Our courts of justice are open equally to the stranger and the citizen for the redress of grievances, for the remedy of injuries, and for the punishment of crime.

Our numerous and well attended schools attest our efforts, and our desire for the improvement of our children.

Our churches for the worship of our Creator, every where to be seen, bear testimony to our piety, and to our acknowledgment of His Providence.

The native African bowing down with us before the altar of the living God, declare that from us, feeble as we are, the light of Christianity has gone forth, while upon that curse of curses, the slave trade, a deadly blight has fallen as far as our influence extends.

Therefore in the name of humanity, and virtue and religion—in the name of the Great God, our common Creator, and our common Judge, we appeal to the nations of Christendom, and earnestly and respectfully ask of them, that they will regard us with the

sympathy and friendly consideration, to which the peculiarities of our condition entitle us, and to extend to us, that comity which marks the friendly intercourse of civilized and independent communities.

DONE IN CONVENTION, at Monrovia, in the County of Montserrado, by the unanimous consent of the people of the Commonwealth of Liberia, this twenty-sixth day of July, in the year of our Lord, One thousand, eight hundred and forty-seven.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF we have hereto set our names.

Montserrado County

S. Benedict, President	J. N. Lewis,
H. Teage,	Beverly R. Wilson,
Elijah Johnson,	J. B. Gripon

Grand Bassa County

John Day	A. W. Gardiner
Amos Herring	Ephraim Titler

Sinoe County

R. E. Murray	Jacob W. Prout, Secretary to the Convention.
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## *Article I.* DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

THE end of the institution, maintenance, and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body politic, to protect it, and to furnish the individuals who compose it, with the power of enjoying in safety and tranquility, their natural rights, and the blessings of life; and whenever these great objects are not obtained, the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness.

Therefore, we the People of the Commonwealth of Liberia, in Africa, acknowledging with devout gratitude, the goodness of God, in granting to us the blessings of the christian religion, and political, religious, and civil liberty, do, in order to secure these blessings for ourselves and our posterity, and to establish justice, insure domestic peace, and promote the general welfare, hereby solemnly associate and constitute ourselves a Free, Sovereign and Independent State, by the name of the REPUBLIC of LIBERIA, and do ordain and establish this Constitution for the government of the same.

**Section 1st.** All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights; among which, are the rights of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and protecting property and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.

**Section 2nd.** All power is inherent in the people; all free governments are instituted by their authority and for their benefit and they have the right to alter and reform the same when their safety and happiness require it.

**Section 3rd.** All men have a natural and inalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, without

obstruction or molestation from others: all persons demeaning themselves peaceably, and not obstructing others in their religious worship, are entitled to the protection of law, in the free exercise of their own religion; and no sect of christians shall have exclusive privileges or preference, over any other sect; but all shall be alike tolerated: and no religious test whatever shall be required as a qualification for civil office, or the exercise of any civil right.

**Section 4th.** There shall be no slavery within this Republic. Nor shall any citizen of this Republic, or any person resident therein, deal in slaves, either within or without this Republic, directly or indirectly.

**Section 5th.** The people have a right at all times, in an orderly and peaceable manner, to assemble and consult upon the common good; to instruct their representatives, and to petition the government, or any public functionaries for the redress of grievances.

**Section 6th.** Every person injured shall have remedy therefor, by due course of law; justice shall be done without sale, denial or delay; and in all cases, not arising under martial law, or upon impeachment, the parties shall have a right to trial by jury, and to be heard in person or by counsel, or both.

**Section 7th.** No person shall be held to answer for a capital or infamous crime, except in cases of impeachment, cases arising in the army and navy, and petty offences, unless upon presentment by a grand jury; and every person criminally charged, shall have a right to be seasonably furnished with a copy of the charge, to be confronted with witnesses against him,—to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor; and to have a speedy, public and impartial trial by a jury of the vicinity. He shall not be compelled to furnish or give evidence against himself; and no person shall for the same offence be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb.

**Section 8th.** No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, property or privilege, but by judgment of his peers, or the law of the land.

**Section 9th.** No place shall be searched, nor person seized, on a criminal charge or suspicion, unless upon warrant lawfully issued, upon probable cause supported by oath, or solemn affirmation, specially designating the place or person, and the object of the search.

**Section 10th.** Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor excessive punishment inflicted. Nor shall the legislature make any law impairing the obligation of contracts; nor any law rendering any act punishable, in any manner in which it was not punishable when it was committed.

**Section 11th.** All elections shall be by ballot, and every citizen (Male and Female) of twenty-one years of age possessing real estate shall have the right of suffrage. When applied to Voters in the Provinces of the hinterland of the Republic, "possessing real estate" shall be construed to include possessing a hut on which he or she pays the hut tax.

**Section 12th.** The people have a right to keep and bear arms for the common defence. And as in time of peace, armies are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be maintained, without the consent of the legislature; and the military power shall always be held in exact subordination to the civil authority, and be governed by it.

**Section 13th.** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation.

**Section 14th.** The power of this government shall be divided into three distinct departments: Legislative, Executive, and Judicial; and no person belonging to one of these departments, shall exercise any of the powers belonging to either of the others. This section is not to be construed to include Justices of the Peace.

**Section 15th.** The liberty of the press is essential to the security of freedom in a state; it ought not, therefore, to be restrained in this Republic.

The printing press shall be free to every person, who undertakes to examine the proceedings of the Legislature or any branch of government; and no law shall ever be made to restrain the rights thereof. The free communication of thoughts and opinions, is one of the invaluable rights of man, and every citizen may freely speak, write and print, on any subject, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty.

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 libels, the jury shall have a right to determine the law and the facts, under the direction of the court, as in other cases.

**Section 16th.** No subsidy, charge, impost, or duties ought to be established, fixed, laid or levied under any pretext whatsoever, without the consent of the people, or their representatives in the legislature.

**Section 17th.** Suits may be brought against the Republic in such manner, and in such cases as the Legislature may, by law direct.

**Section 18th.** No person can, in any case, be subjected to the law martial, or to any penalties or pains by virtue of that law, (except those employed in the army or navy, and except the militia in actual service,) but by the authority of the legislature.

**Section 19th.** In order to prevent those who are vested with authority, from becoming oppressors, the people shall have a right at such periods, and in such manner, as they shall establish by their form of government;—to cause their public officers to return to private life, and to fill up vacant places by certain and regular elections and appointments.

**Section 20th.** That all prisoners shall be bailable by sufficient sureties, unless, for capital offences, when the proof is evident, or presumption great: and the privilege and benefit of the writ of

*habeas corpus*, shall be enjoyed in this Republic, in the most free, easy, cheap, expeditious and ample manner: and shall not be suspended by the legislature, except upon the most pressing and urgent occasions, and for a limited time, not exceeding twelve months.

## Article II. LEGISLATIVE POWERS

**Section 1st.** The Legislative power shall be vested in a Legislature of Liberia, and shall consist of two separate branches. A House of Representatives and a Senate, to be styled the Legislature of Liberia; each of which shall have a negative on the other, and the enacting style of their acts and laws shall be, "It is enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of Liberia, in Legislature Assembled."

**Section 2nd.** The representatives shall be elected by, and for the inhabitants of the several counties and provinces of Liberia and shall be apportioned among the several counties and provinces as follows: The County of Montserrado shall have five representatives, the Territory of Marshall shall have one representative, the County of Grand Bassa shall have four representatives, the County of Sinoe shall have four representatives, the County of Maryland shall have four representatives, the County of Grand Cape Mount shall have three representatives, and the three existing Provinces of the Republic situated in the hinterland thereof shall each have one representative, and all counties which shall hereafter be admitted into the Republic shall have one representative, and for every ten thousand inhabitants one representative shall be added. No person shall be a representative who has not resided in the County or Province two whole years immediately previous to his or her election, and who shall not when elected be an inhabitant of the County or Province, and who does not own unencumbered real estate of not less value than one thousand dollars in the County in which he or she resides or who in the Provinces shall not own a hut in which he or she resides and for which he or she pays the hut tax, and who shall not have attained the age of twenty-three years.

The representatives shall be elected quadrennially and shall serve for four years from the time of their election.

**Section 3rd.** When a vacancy occurs in the representation of any County or Province by death, resignation, or otherwise, it shall be filled by a new election.

**Section 4th.** The House of Representatives shall elect their own Speaker and other officers; they shall also have the sole power of impeachment.

**Section 5th.** The Senate shall consist of two members from Montserrado County, two from Bassa County, two from Sinoe County, and two from each county which may be hereafter incorporated into this Republic. No person shall be a Senator, who shall not have resided three whole years immediately previous to his or her election in the Republic of Liberia, and who shall not when elected, be an inhabitant of the county which he or she represents, and who does not own unencumbered real estate of not less value than one thousand two hundred dollars in the County, and who shall not have attained the age of twenty-five years. The Senators shall serve for six years and shall be elected quadrennially, and those elected in A.D. 1905 shall retain their seats for six years from the time of their election, and all who are otherwise elected shall serve for six years.

**Section 6th.** The Senate shall try all impeachments; the Senators being first sworn or solemnly affirmed to try the same impartially, and according to law; and no person shall be convicted but by the concurrence of two thirds of the Senators present. Judgments in such cases shall not extend beyond removal from office, and disqualification to hold an office in the Republic: but the party may be tried at law for the same offence.

**Section 7th.** It shall be the duty of the Legislature, as soon as conveniently may be, after the adoption of this constitution, and once at least in every ten years afterwards, to cause a true census to be taken of each town, and county of the Republic of Liberia, and a representative shall be allowed every town, having a population of

ten thousand inhabitants, and for every additional ten thousand in the counties after the first census, one representative shall be added to that county until the number of representatives shall amount to thirty: afterwards one representative shall be added for every thirty thousand.

**Section 8th.** Each branch of the Legislature shall be judge of the election returns and qualifications of its own members. A majority of each shall be necessary to transact business, but a less number may adjourn from day to day and compel the attendance of absent members. Each house may adopt its own rules of proceedings, enforce order, and with the concurrence of two thirds, may expel a member.

**Section 9th.** Neither house shall adjourn for more than two days without the consent of the other; and both houses shall always sit in the same town.

**Section 10th.** Every bill or resolution which shall have passed both branches of the Legislature, shall before it becomes a law, be laid before the President for his approval; if he approves, he shall sign it, if not, he shall return it to the Legislature with his objections—if the Legislature shall afterwards pass the bill or resolution by a vote of two thirds in each branch, it shall become a law. If the President shall neglect to return such bill or resolution to the Legislature with his objections for five days after the same shall have been so laid before him—the Legislature remaining in session during that time, such neglect shall be equivalent to his signature.

**Section 11th.** The Senators and Representatives shall receive from the Republic a compensation for their services to be ascertained by law; and shall be privileged from arrest except for treason, felony or breach of the peace while attending at, going to, or returning from the session of the Legislature.



*Article III. EXECUTIVE POWER*

**Section 1st.** The Supreme Executive Power shall be vested in a President who shall be elected by the people and shall hold office for a term of eight years. No President may be elected for two consecutive terms of eight years, but should a majority of the ballots cast at a second or any other succeeding election by all of the electors voting thereat elect him, his second or any other succeeding term of office shall be for four years. He shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Navy and Air Forces. He shall in the recess of the Legislature, have power to call out the Militia or any portion thereof, into actual service in defence of the Republic. He shall have power to make treaties, provided the Senate concur therein, by a vote of two thirds of the Senators present. He shall nominate, and with the advice and consent of the Senate appoint and commission,

all Ambassadors, and other public Ministers and Consuls, Secretaries of State, of National Defence, of the Treasury, Attorney General, all Judges of Courts, Sheriffs, Coroners, Marshals, Justices of the Peace, Clerks of Courts, Registers, Notaries Public, and all other officers of State civil and military, whose appointment may not be otherwise provided for by the Constitution, or by standing laws. And in the recess of the senate, he may fill any vacancies in those offices, until the next session of the senate. He shall receive all ambassadors and other public ministers. He shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed:—he shall inform the Legislature from time to time, of the condition of the Republic, and recommend any public measures for their adoption, which he may think expedient. He may after conviction, remit any public forfeitures and penalties, and grant reprieves and pardons for public offences, except in cases of impeachment. He may require information and advice from any public officer, touching matters pertaining to his office. He may on extraordinary occasions, convene the Legislature, and may adjourn the two houses whenever they cannot agree as to the time of adjournment.

**Section 2nd.** There shall be a Vice President who shall be elected in the same manner and for the same term as the President, and whose qualifications shall be the same: He shall be the President of the Senate, and give the casting vote when the house is equally divided on any subject. And in case of the removal of the President from office or his death, resignation, or inability to discharge the powers and duties of said office, the same shall devolve upon the Vice President; and the Legislature may by law provide for the cases of removal, death, resignation or inability, both of the President, and Vice President, declaring what officer shall then act as President, and such officer shall act accordingly; until the disability be removed, or a President shall be elected. When a vacancy occurs in the office of Vice President, by the death resignation or otherwise, after any regular election of President and Vice President, the President shall immediately call a special election to fill said vacancy.

**Section 3rd.** The Secretary of State shall keep the records of the State, and all the records and papers of the Legislative body, and all other public records and documents, not belonging to any other department, and shall lay the same when required, before the President or Legislature. He shall attend upon them when required and perform such other duties as may be enjoined by law.

**Section 4th.** The Secretary of the Treasury or other persons who may by law, be charged with the custody of the public monies, shall before he receive such monies, give bonds to the State with sufficient sureties, to the acceptance of the Legislature, for the faithful discharge of his trust. He shall exhibit a true account of such monies when required by the President or Legislature, and no monies shall be drawn from the Treasury, but by warrant from the President, in consequence of appropriation made by law.

**Section 5th.** All Ambassadors and other public Ministers, and Consuls, the Secretary of State, of National Defence, and of the Treasury, the Attorney General, and Postmaster General shall hold their offices during the pleasure of the President. Justices of the

peace, sheriffs, coroners, marshals, clerks of courts, registers, and notaries public, shall hold their offices for the term of two years from the date of their respective commissions; but may be removed from office within that time by the President, at his pleasure: and all other officers whose terms of office may not be otherwise limited by law, shall hold their offices during the pleasure of the President. The Legislature shall pass a standing law organizing and regulating the Civil Service of the Republic, which law shall declare what offices may be controlled by the provisions of said law. The provisions of this section of the Constitution relating to tenure of office shall not apply to offices falling within the provisions of the Civil Service law.

**Section 6th.** Every civil officer may be removed from office by impeachment, for official misconduct. Every such officer may also be removed by the President, upon the address of both branches of the Legislature, stating their particular reason for his removal.

**Section 7th.** No person shall be eligible to the Office of President who is not a citizen of this Republic by birth or a naturalized citizen of over twenty-five years' residence and who is not possessed of unencumbered real estate of the value of two thousand and five hundred dollars.

**Section 8th.** The President shall at stated times receive for his services, a compensation which shall neither be increased nor diminished during the period for which he shall have been elected: And before he enters on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation.

I do solemnly swear, (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the Republic of Liberia, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the constitution, and enforce the laws of the Republic of Liberia.

## *Article IV.* JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

**Section 1st.** The Judicial power of this Republic shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and such subordinate courts as the Legislature may from time to time establish. The Judges of the Supreme Court, and all other Judges of Courts, shall hold their office during good behaviour; but may be removed by the President on the address of two thirds of both houses for that purpose, or by impeachment and conviction thereon. The Judges shall have salaries established by law, which may be increased, but not diminished during their continuance in office. They shall not receive any other perquisites or emoluments whatever from parties or others, on account of any duty required of them.

**Section 2nd.** The Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction in all cases affecting ambassadors, or other public ministers and consuls, and those to which a County shall be a party. In all other cases the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions, and under such regulations as the Legislature shall from time to time make.

**Section 3rd.** The number of justices of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia shall be limited to One Chief Justice and Four Associate Justices, a majority of whom shall be deemed competent to transact the business of the Supreme Court and from whose Judgment there shall be no appeal.

## *Article V.* MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

**Section 1st.** All laws now in force in the Commonwealth of Liberia and not repugnant to this constitution, shall be in force as the laws of the Republic of Liberia, until they shall be repealed by the Legislature.

**Section 2nd.** All judges, magistrates, and other officers now concerned in the administration of justice, in the Commonwealth of Liberia, and all other existing civil and military officers therein, shall continue to hold and discharge the duties of their respective offices, in the name and the authority of the Republic, until others shall be appointed and commissioned in their stead, pursuant to this Constitution.

**Section 3rd.** All towns and municipal corporations within the Republic, constituted under the laws of the Commonwealth of Liberia, shall retain their existing organizations and privileges, and the respective officers thereof shall remain in office, and act under the authority of this Republic, in the same manner and with like powers as they now possess under the laws of said Commonwealth.

**Section 4th.** The first election of President, Vice President, Senators and Representatives shall be held on the first Tuesday in October in the Year of our Lord, Eighteen Hundred and Forty Seven, in the same manner as elections of members of the Council are now held in the Commonwealth of Liberia and the votes shall be certified and returned to the Colonial Secretary, and the results of the election shall be ascertained, posted and notified by him, as is now by law provided, in case of such members of Council.

**Section 5th.** All other elections of President, Vice President, Senators and Representatives, shall be held in the respective towns on the first Tuesday in May in every two years, such elections to be held and regulated in such manner as the Legislature may by law prescribe. The returns of votes shall be made to the Secretary of State, who shall open the same, and forthwith issue notices of the election to the persons apparently so elected, Senators and Representatives: and all such returns shall be by him laid before the Legislature at its next ensuing session, together with the list of the names of the persons who appear by such returns, to have been duly elected Senators and Representatives; and the persons appearing by said returns to be duly elected, shall proceed to organize themselves accordingly as the Senate and House of Representatives.

The votes for President shall be sorted, counted and declared by the House of Representatives. And if no person shall appear to have a majority of such votes the Senators and Representatives present, shall in Convention by joint ballot, elect from among the persons having the three highest number of votes, a person to act as President for the ensuing term.

**Section 6th.** The Legislature shall assemble once at least in every year, and such meeting shall be on the first Monday in January unless a different day shall be appointed by law.

**Section 7th.** Every Legislator and other officer appointed under this constitution shall before he enters upon the duties of his office, take and subscribe a solemn oath or affirmation to support the Constitution of this Republic, and faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of such office. The presiding officer of the Senate shall administer such oath or affirmation to the President, in Convention of both houses, and the President shall administer the same to the Vice President, to the Senators, and to the Representatives in like manner. When the President is unable to attend, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court may administer the oath or affirmation to him at any place, and also to the Vice President, Senators and Representatives in Convention. Other officers may take such oath or affirmation before the President, Chief Justice, or any other person who may be designated by law.

**Section 8th.** All elections of public officers shall be made by a majority of the votes, except in cases otherwise regulated by the Constitution or by law.

**Section 9th.** Offices created by this Constitution which the present circumstances of the Republic do not require to be filled shall not be filled until the Legislature shall deem it necessary.

**Section 10th.** The property of which a woman may be possessed at the time of her marriage, and also that of which she may afterwards become possessed, otherwise than by her husband, shall not be held responsible for his debts, whether contracted before or after marriage.

Nor shall the property thus intended to be secured to the woman be alienated otherwise than by her free and voluntary consent, and such alienation may be made by her either by sale, devise or otherwise.

**Section 11th.** In all cases in which estates are insolvent, the widow shall be entitled to one third of the real estate during her natural life, and to one third of the personal estate, which she shall hold in her own right subject to alienation by her, by devise or otherwise.

**Section 12th.** No person shall be entitled to hold real estate in this Republic, unless he be a citizen of the same. Nevertheless this article shall not be construed to apply to Colonization, Missionary, Educational, or other benevolent institutions, so long as the property or estate is applied to its legitimate purposes.

**Section 13th.** The great object of forming these Colonies, being to provide a home for the dispersed and oppressed children of Africa, and to regenerate and enlighten this benighted continent, none but Negroes or persons of Negro descent shall be eligible to citizenship in this Republic.

**Section 14th.** The purchase of any land by any citizen or citizens from the aborigines of this country for his or their own use, or for the benefit of others, or estates or estates in fee simple, shall be considered null and void to all intents and purposes.

**Section 15th.** The improvement of the native tribes and their advancement in the arts of agriculture and husbandry, being a cherished object of this government, it shall be the duty of the President to appoint in each county some discreet person whose duty it shall be to make regular and periodical tours through the country for the purpose of calling the attention of the natives to these wholesome branches of industry, and of instructing them in the same, and the Legislature shall, as soon as it can conveniently be done, make provision for these purposes by the appropriation of money.

**Section 16th.** The existing regulations of the American Colonization Society, in the Commonwealth, relative to immigrants, shall remain the same in the Republic, until regulated by compact between the Society and the Republic; nevertheless, the Legislature shall make no law prohibiting immigration. And it shall be among the first duties of the Legislature to take measures to arrange the future relations between the American Colonization Society and this Republic.

**Section 17th.** This Constitution may be altered whenever two-thirds of both branches of the Legislature shall deem it necessary; in which case the alteration or amendments shall first be considered and approved by the Legislature by the concurrence of two-thirds of the Members of each branch and afterwards by them submitted to the people and adopted by two-thirds of all the electors at a special election called for that purpose.