

An ACT to prevent masters of ships and vessels from clandestinely carrying servants and slaves, or persons indebted, out of this province.

Preamble.

**W**HEREAS divers servants and slaves, belonging to the people of this province, and persons indebted therein,

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have been carried away out of the same province in ships or vessels trading therein, to the great loss and damage of his majesty's subjects the good people of Maryland; to prevent therefore so great an evil, it is prayed that it may be enacted,

October,  
1753.

The second section prescribed a certain oath to be taken by masters of vessels, before entry could be made, but has ceased to operate since the adoption of the federal constitution.

III. AND BE IT LIKewise ENACTED, That no master of a vessel coming into this province, and entering to trade therein, shall suffer any slave or slaves, servant or servants, to frequent his or their vessel or vessels, or come on board or conceal such servant or servants, or slave or slaves, on board such his or their ship or vessel, or ships or other vessels: and in case any servant or servants, slave or slaves, shall be kept or concealed on board any ship or ships, vessel or vessels, coming into and trading within this province, for the space of one hour or longer, the master or commander of such ship or vessel shall forfeit and pay at the rate of twenty shillings current money, for every hour each servant or slave shall be suffered to frequent his or their vessel, or be kept or concealed on board his or their vessel, to the party owning such servant or slave, or servants or slaves, the same to be recovered in a summary way, before one justice of the peace, with costs.

Masters of vessels not to permit slaves or servants to frequent their vessels, &c.

IV. PROVIDED ALWAYS, That it shall and may be lawful for any master or commander of any ship or vessel into or trading within this province to hire any servant or slave, servants or slaves, from any inhabitant within this province, to work on board such his or their ship and vessel, or ships and vessels, any thing in this act contained to the contrary thereof in anywise notwithstanding.

Proviso

The 5th section provided that the chief mate or next officer, in case of the sickness of the master, should take the oath, required of the latter as mentioned in the note on the second section; but this section has also ceased to operate since the adoption of the federal constitution.

The 6th section limited the duration of this act, but it was made perpetual by an act in 1763.