

# HOUSE.....No. 57.

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## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Feb. 29, 1836.

*Ordered*, That Mr. HOWE, of Boston,  
HARRINGTON, of Worcester,  
MOSELEY, of Newburyport,

be a Committee to take into consideration the expediency of instructing our Senators, and requesting our Representatives in Congress, to endeavor, so far, to procure an alteration in the laws in relation to naturalization, that no person, who is not a native born citizen of the United States, shall be allowed the right of suffrage. And that said Committee have leave to report to this House within ten days.

L. S. CUSHING, *Clerk*.

## **Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 23, 1836.

The majority of the Committee, on the order relative to an alteration of the laws in relation to Naturalization, have considered the subject, and

### **R E P O R T :**

That it is not expedient, at the present time, to make any alteration in the laws relative to this subject.

**JUBAL HARRINGTON,  
EBENEZER MOSELEY.**

## **Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 23, 1836.

The undersigned, minority of the Special Committee, to whom was referred the order to take into consideration the expediency of instructing our Senators, and requesting our Representatives of this Commonwealth in Congress, to endeavor to procure an alteration in the law in relation to Naturalization, that no person, who is not a native born citizen of the United States, be allowed hereafter the right of suffrage, has had the same under consideration; and respectfully asks leave to submit the following

### **MINORITY REPORT.**

In reviewing the past history of the United States, with regard to its policy towards foreigners, the undersigned finds, that it has not only been the policy of individuals, but of the government itself, by every possible means, to promote emigration to this country. And as one of the many inducements held out to foreigners, by the manifold benevolent, humane and kind acts, extended towards them by our ancestors, was, that they, in a short

time, and with as little trouble as possible, might become our fellow citizens, and enjoy all the privileges and immunities of our country. In all this, the minority of your committee will not say that our forefathers erred. Our ancestors beheld before them, a vast extent of country, a mighty wilderness, thinly populated, and almost imagined themselves in a state of voluntary exile. Nothing to them seemed so much wanted as inhabitants, and nothing more desirable than the arrival of new comers; who in most instances were undoubtedly near relatives and friends; hence their community of sentiment, interest, and their willingness to admit them into the social compact, and to extend to them all the rights and privileges of citizenship. But those days are past, and the time has arrived, for a radical change in the policy of our government towards foreigners. When our ancestors fled the persecutions of Europe, and took up their abode in this cold inhospitable clime, in this vast wilderness, it was, that they might not only enjoy that freedom of thought, and that liberty of conscience, which they were denied in their own country, but that they might lay the foundation of that superstructure, and to establish that form of government, which should secure to their posterity the invaluable blessing, both of civil and religious liberty. If it was theirs to found and rear our free institutions, it can be less the duty of us, to guard, and to hand down unimpaired to posterity, the sacred trust committed to our care; that of perpetuating our free institutions. But the minority of your committee believes, that no people can long maintain a free government, who lightly regard the elective franchise. It is a privilege too sacred to be trifled with; a privilege that should not alike be extended to all without any discrimi-

nation. The history of Rome and Greece are peculiarly instructive to us on this point. Rome was overrun with a hoard of foreigners from the four corners of the earth; the descendents of the ancient Romans soon became few, in comparison with the great multitudes, who, by some means or other, acquired citizenship; the consequence of which was, that her ancient people were outnumbered and overwhelmed; their morals became corrupted, and a final end put to their liberties. The republic of Athens, guarded the avenues to citizenship with great strictness. With them, foreigners could only become citizens in their great grand children. But we require only the short period of two years. If we are to throw wide open the portals of our government and admit all to the ballot box, without any discrimination who ask for the privilege, then indeed the great object for which our ancestors contended, and for which they suffered so much, has failed; that of making our own laws, and the right of governing ourselves.

If any nation on earth was ever in danger from an influx of foreigners, from their corrupting and demoralizing influence, we are that nation. The people schooled and brought up in the bosom of monarchical governments, have very different notions and feelings of governments from ourselves; liberty with them, is but another name for licentiousness; from the very nature of the case, they can never divest themselves so far of their former prejudices and prepossessed notions of government, as to become attached to ours. What is generally the course of foreigners on their arrival in this country? They at once discover that every thing is wrong, and with the greatest zeal set themselves to work to reform and to remove the defects of our government. They become profound pol-

iticians, skilled in all the science of government, and able at once to set all things to rights. The history of the past year, presents to us a striking instance of the ignorance, and interference of foreigners in our institutions; and it admonishes us, that if we would preserve our institutions and maintain our liberties, we must more closely guard the avenues to citizenship. For, if a few designing and ambitious foreigners, who are not citizen, can sow the seeds of distrust and of disunion amongst us, how much more infinite must be the mischief, when the number, who by any means, shall have acquired the right of citizenship, shall bear any proportion to the old inhabitants. In whatever country foreigners interfere with government, the change is more generally for the worse; for, however honest and patriotic in their intentions, they are more frequently the dupes of the designing demagogue, and are but the instruments employed to subvert their own and their country's liberty.

Europe with her combined armies and fleets could not conquer us; but by the mighty tide of emigration that she is rolling upon us, she may out-number and overwhelm us; corrupt our morals, destroy our nationality, and subvert our liberties. If the danger creeps upon us imperceptibly and unseen, and at present unfelt, yet in the end, its consequences will be no less sure and fatal. The minority of your committee believes, that the people of every country are the best qualified to legislate for themselves. And therefore, is of the opinion, that no person should hereafter become a citizen, but by being born within the United States. There can be no injustice in withholding the right of suffrage from persons not born within the United States; for we take away from them no right, but only withhold a privilege, which, if granted,

they would use only to their own and our injury. Entertaining these views, the minority of your committee would respectfully ask leave, to present the following Preamble and accompanying Resolves.

CRANSTON HOWE.

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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### PREAMBLE.

WHEREAS, The danger of admitting foreigners to all the rights and privileges of citizenship, has become so apparent, as to excite the alarm and just apprehension of the patriot and statesman, for the stability and duration of our free institutions; and whereas, the evil is greatly increasing, and threatens at no distant day to undermine and destroy our republican form of government, and to involve us in anarchy and despotism. Therefore

*Resolved*, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their endeavours to procure such an alteration in the law, that no person hereafter, who is not a native born citizen of the United States, shall be allowed the right of suffrage.

*Resolved*, That His Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit a copy of these resolves to each of the Senators and Representatives of this Commonwealth in Congress, and also to each of the Governors of the several states, with a request that they would lay the same before their respective Legislatures.