To the Honorable the Senate and the Honorable the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The subscribers, Indian Proprietors and inhabitants of the Plantation of Marshpee, in the County of Barnstable, humbly represent; that application has been made to us by certain interested white men, residing in our vicinity, to sign a petition to the General Court, praying an alteration in the present government of the Plantation, and some of our brethren have been influenced by promises of reward and other improper motives, to subscribe their names to said petition. We acquiesce in the policy, which induced your ancestors to impose certain restrictions on our nation, the aboriginals of the Country, which operate as an abridgment of our rights as freemen: for we acknowledge, that the causes, which gave rise to it still exist in full force. But our duty and interest compel us to say, that amidst all the changes, we have experienced, and all the plans, that have been attempted for the regulation of the plantation, no one has so well succeeded, as the present establishment, under which the Proprietors and Inhabitants have lived contented and happy, and would have continued to do so, without wishing any alteration, had it not have been for the officious interference of certain Inhabitants, unconnected with the Plantation, who contemplate deriving a benefit to themselves. All this will appear from a consideration of the following facts. When the board of Overseers, constituting the present Government, was established by the law passed in January, seventeen hundred, and eighty nine, the Plantation was involved in

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heavy debate, and no regular provision was made for our religious instruction; for the support of Schools to teach our children; of the relief of our poor and distressed, although, at that time, there was an unusual waste and destruction of the wood growing on said Plantation. Since that period, and during the existing government, method has been introduced into the management of our affairs; suitable schools are provided for our children; proper medical aid for our sick; comfortable and necessary things for our poor and distressed; and these objects are effected by leasing yearly the lands we do not improve; by taking and selling such quantities of wood only, as is beneficial to its future growth; and by guarding our personal, as well as territorial rights from the depredations of unprincipled speculations; And yet our funds were
never fo respectable, as they are at this moment, as will appear by inspecting the state of our treasury; the Treasurer’s accounts being once every year liquidated and adjusted. By the late death of the Revd. Mr. Hawley we not only lost our religious teacher, but our father and friend, who preached to us by his example as powerfully, as by his exhortation, and whose constant injunction on us, was a strict adherence to the present established government, as best calculated to promote our prosperity and happiness. The board of Overseers, in compliance with our request, are devising means in some measure to supply his lofs, by providing for us an exemplary teacher in the principles of Piety, Religion & Morality. Some of the objections to our present constitution, as it is called, contained in the aforesaid petition presented to us, are not founded in truth; and others, instead of being objections to it, we deem salutory provisions. Among the former is the represen-

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tation, that the Board of Overseers convened twice a year, whereas there is only an annual meeting of the Board, & at that meeting an arrangement is made of all our concerns for the year. It is also said, that there is a Secretary in addition to the five Overseers, whereas the Secretary is invariably elected from the Board of Overseers, without creating any additional expense to the Plantation. It is farther said, there is an unnecessary agent to inspect the Herring river; though it is well known, that this Officer - made no part of the original constitution, but receives his appointment by virtue of a special act, passed at our particular desire, for the preservation of the fish in that river, obtained, indeed, by the agency by the board of Overseers. Among the latter is the objection so much dwelt upon, that a majority of the Overseers reside out of the County, and at a distance from the Plantation. This we humbly conceive a necessary, important and salutory provision. The complaint used to be, when all the persons concerned in the government resided near the plan
tation, that being without check or constraint, their system of conduct was adapted to advance their own involvement, and that both the persons and lands of the Indians became subjects of speculation; and bitter experience has convinced us of the Justice of their complaint. Two of the Overseers, the Treasurer and bothe Guardians, either live within the district of Marshpee or very near to it, their accounts of supplies and services are examined and allowed by the Board of Overseers at their annual meeting, and we have heard no complaints, either of extravagance or great
expense. if the number of Officers is diminished, there will be no diminution of the governmental expence,

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for the same business must be transacted & more frequent meetings must be held for the purpose of transacting it. It may indeed be rendered more profitable to the individuals appointed to administer the Government, because having no check in the adjustment of their services, they will be under strong temptation to rate them higher, than in different men would do, who view them through a less partial medium; - and we cannot rationally hope, that any change of Government, productive of order, can be attended with less expense in the administration, than that already established.

In regard to the poor begging in the neighboring towns, we presume there are not more instances of it, among the Indians of our Plantation, than take place in the best regulated communities, where their inhabitants are not forcibly prevented from wandering at large. Without farther trespassing on the time and patience of this Honorable Court, we anxiously pray, that the government, which after [erasure: ing ] testing it, by eighteen years experience, we are entirely satisfied with, may be suffered to remain undisturbed, and we be secured from new experiments, which will probably plunge us in wretchedness, and which did not originate with the Indians, but with others, who we fear have not a single eye to our interest or, gratification. In all events we place full confidence in the wisdom, rectitude and benevolence of your Honors, and shall rest perfectly secure, that you will not in any degree modify our present situation, until we have been duly notified, and heard on this, to us momentous, subject, either before the General Court, or by a Committee specially designated to repair to Marshpee, who will have full opportunity of enquiring into all grounds of complaints and of determining whether any will meliorate our condition.
the Mark of X Gideon Nautumpum
the Mark of X Deliverance Nautumpum
William Mingo
Sarah Pognet

the mark of Sarah X Quibish

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the mark of marcy X marston

[folio 3:
the mark of frances x marston
the mark of ] [ illegible ] x Amos
the mark Bar shearba x Richard

the mark of Abigail X Pocknet
the mark of Hannah x Richard
the Mark of X Joanna
Cowet
Samuel Cowet
hosea keeter
the Mark of x William
Simon
the Mark of x Sarah
Simon
the Mark of x Isaac
Simon
the Mark of x hannah
Simon
Isaac Wick ham
Susannah Wick ham

Jeremiah Badcock
F Sollomon Frances
Ebenezer Quaplah
the Mark of X Sarah
Holdan
of the mark X Sarah
keeter
the mark of x Bethien Cowet
Elisha Amos
Aaron Ralph
[ illegible ]
the mark of x A Luby
Amos
the mark of X Nancy
Amey
Betsey [ illegible ] wood
Nancy Green
Isaac Coombs
Lydia Coombs
of the mark X Jubey
fredley
the mark of X BathSheba
fredley
hir
Hetty X monasen
mark
John freeman
the mark of Hannah X freeman
the mark of Sarah X Amous
Lois pocknet
the mark of Isaac X Amous
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Petition of
the Mashpee Indians

[folio 4: