

AN ACT declaring Domestic Slavery to be lawful in this State.—1839,
ch. 338.

Preamble.

WHEREAS, the courts in some of the non-slaveholding states require the owners of fugitive slaves to prove that slavery exists in this state, and it is right to provide a convenient mode of enabling such owners to procure a certified copy of a law, proving that slavery exists by law in this state; therefore,

Slavery exists in this state.

Be it enacted, by the General Assembly of Maryland, That negroes and mulattoes have been held in slavery in this state as the property of their owners from the earliest settlement of this state, and are, and may be hereafter held in slavery as the property of their owners, and that every owner of such negro or mulatto is entitled to the service and labour of such negro or mulatto for the life of such negro or mulatto, except in cases where such negro or mulatto can shew, that by the grant or devise of the owner or some former owner of such negro or mulatto, or his or her maternal ancestor, a shorter period of service has been prescribed.