

## AN ACT TO PREVENT AGED AND DECREPIT SLAVES FROM BECOMING BURTHENSOME WITHIN THIS COLONY

[CHAPTER 1608.]

[Chapter 1608, of Van Schaack, where the act is printed in full.]

An Act to prevent aged and decrepit  
Slaves from becoming burthensome within this  
Colony.

[Passed, March 8, 1773.]

WHEREAS there have been repeated Instances in which the Owners of Slaves have obliged them after they are grown aged and decrepit, to go about begging for the common Necessaries of Life, whereby they have not only been reduced to the utmost Distress themselves, but have become Burthens on the Humanity and Charity of others; and sometimes also such Owners by Collusive Bargains, have pretended to transfer the property of such Slaves to persons not able to maintain them, from which the like evil Consequences have followed: For the Prevention whereof, and effectually to suppress such unjust and inhuman practices.

BE IT ENACTED by his Excellency the Governor the Council and the General Assembly, and it is hereby enacted by the Authority of the same, That from and after the passing of this Act if any Person or Persons within this Colony shall knowingly and willingly suffer and permit his, her, or their Slave or Slaves to go about begging of others, Victuals Cloathing or other Necessaries, such Person or Persons being thereof convicted before two Magistrates (who are hereby fully impowered and strictly enjoined to inquire into, hear, and determine the same) shall forfeit for every such Offence the sum of ten pounds, to be levied by Distress and Sale of the Offender's Goods by Warrant of the said Justices and to be applied, the one half to the Person giving Information thereof, and the other half to the Poor of the place where such Offence shall be committed.

AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Person or Persons shall by such collusive Conveyance or fraudulent Agreement as aforesaid pretend to sell or dispose of any such aged and decrepit Slave or Slaves to any Person or Persons who is or are unable to keep and maintain such Slave or Slaves, such Sale or Sales shall be absolutely void, and the person or persons making such pretended Sale shall incur the Penalty of twenty Pounds and shall moreover be deemed to be the Owner and Owners of such Slave or Slaves within the Intent and Meaning of the first section of this Act; which last mentioned Forfeiture shall be recovered levied and applied in the Manner herein before directed.