

*CAP. LVIII.*

# An ACT against TUMULTS and DISORDERS, upon pretence of preparing or presenting PUBLIC PETITIONS or other ADDRESSES to the Governor, or General Assembly.

Preamble.

**T**O prevent tumultuous and other disorderly soliciting and procuring of hands by private persons to petitions, complaints, remonstrances and declarations, and other addressees to the Governor, Council and Assembly, or any or either of them, for alteration of matters established by law, redress of pretended grievances in church or state, or other public concerns, being made use of to serve the ends of factious and seditious persons to the violation of the public peace.

No persons to solicit &c. more than 20 subscribers to petitions &c. to the governor, council and assembly, unless consent to by three justices or by grand jury.

II. *Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and Assembly,* That no person or persons whatsoever shall solicit, labour or procure the getting of hands, or other consent, of any persons above the number of twenty or more, to any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration or other address to the Governor, Council and Assembly or any or either of them, for alteration of matters established by law in church or state, unless the matter thereof have been first consented unto and ordered by three or more justices of that county, or by the major part of the grand jury of the county or division of the county, where the same matter shall arise, at their public assizes, or general quarter sessions; and that no person or persons whatsoever shall repair to the Governor, Council or Assembly, upon pretence of presenting or delivering any petition, complaint, remonstrance or declaration, or other addressees, accompanied with excessive number of people, nor at any one time with more than the number of ten persons, upon pain of incurring a penalty not exceeding the sum of one hundred pounds in money, and three months imprisonment without bail or mainprize for every offence; which offence to be prosecuted in the supreme court, or at the general quarter sessions, within six months after the offence committed and proved by two or more credible witnesses.

Nor repair to the governor &c. to present such petitions, &c. accompanied by more than ten persons.

Offenders shall incur a penalty of £100 and three months imprisonment.

This act not to extend to persons not exceeding twenty, presenting grievances to members of council, &c.

Nor addressees of the council, &c. to the governor.

III. *Provided always,* That this act or any thing therein contained, shall not be construed to extend to debar or hinder any person or persons, not exceeding the number of twenty aforesaid, to present any public or private grievance or complaint to any member or members of the Council or Assembly, during the sitting of the General Assembly, or to the Governor, for any remedy to be thereupon had; nor to extend to any address whatsoever to the Governor, by all or any of the members of the Council and Assembly, or either of them, during the sitting of the General Assembly, but that they may enjoy their freedom of access to his Excellency, as heretofore hath been used.