

We the Subscribers, Members of the Society of People call'd Quakers haveing receiv'd the inclos'd Direction to take upon us the Charge of the City Watch, Take the Freedom of laying before the Commandant¹ the following Representations thereon –

We acknowledge with Thankfullness, the Protection we, as a People have receiv'd from the British Government, and the Indulgence we have experience'd from the Rulers here in Matters relative to our peaceable and religious Profession: and we are desirous that Government should believe that we are dispos'd to perform the Common Offices of Civil Society, and bear its proportionate Burdens so far as the same may be consistent with our Religious Principles, and the peaceable Testimony we have ever borne - We are led to believe the inclos'd Direction was not consider'd in its Nature and Tendency to affect our religious Testimony, or it would not have been issued - With all due respect to the Commandant we shall mention the Ground of our Objections to it - In charging our Society with the whole Duties of the City Watch, at this peculiar Time, when military works and Labour are carried on by the Rest of our fellow Citizens who at other Times share with us in Common the Business of the Watch, appears to us if accepted to be in Substance “a Composition in Lieu of Military Service.” - We cannot in Conscience support or contribute directly or indirectly to the Practice or Business of War - Our peaceable Principles also render the Business of a Watch kept altogether by ourselves attended with Inconveniences, and perhaps so many that its End might be frustrated - Riotors and ill-disposed People would be under small Restraint from Persons who cannot submit even to Bodily Defence, and who would therefore more likely meet with Injustice and abuse themselves than be able to control Boisterous and unruly Men.

The Fewness of our Numbers also would render this Undertaking greatly inadequate to the Purpose intended - The whole Number of Males who are Members of our Society, and arriv'd at a suitable Age do not exceed Fifty Eight - We cannot but think therefore that the Commandant must have misapprehended the Number of Males who compose the Society in this City -

We therefore confide in the Justice and Tenderness of our Rulers for that Indulgence which we only ask for our Conscience Sake.

¹ *the Commandant*: it is unclear exactly which officer this petition is addressed to. General Howe was in charge of the British troops in New York.

We are willing and desirous when call'd to the Watch as a Civil Duty in Common with our Fellow Citizens to comply with so reasonable a Requisition, and those of us who have hitherto been exempted from performing that Service will cheerfully send substitutes if required --

We are With Respect Thy Friends

New York 3^d mo: 19th: 1782 ~

John Burling

Sam'l Bowne

Thos. Dobson

Joseph DeLaplaine

Rob't. Murray

Henry Haydock

Daniel Bowne

Oliver Hull

Isaac Underhill

John Lawrence

William Cowper

Thos. Pearsall

Jacob Watson

Charles Brooke

James Parsons

Ebenezer Haviland

Lindley Murray

Transcribed by Charlotte Jackson

