PETITION of the TRADESMEN, MANUFACTURERS, and others, of the TOWN of BALTIMORE, 11 April 1789

THAT since the Close of the late War, and the Completion of the Revolution, your Petitioners have observed, with serious Regret, the manufacturing and trading Interest of the Country rapidly declining, while the Wealth of the People hath been prodigally expended in the Purchase of those Articles from Foreigners, which our Citizens, if properly encouraged, were fully competent to furnish.

To check this growing Evil, Applications were made, by Petitions, to some of the State Legislatures: These Guardians of the People, in several of the States, interposed their Authority; Laws were by them enacted with the View of subduing, or, at least, diminishing the Rage for Foreign, and of encouraging Domestic Manufactures, but the Event hath clearly demonstrated to all Ranks of Men, that no effectual Provision could reasonably be expected, until one uniform efficient Government should pervade this wide–extended Country.

The happy Period having now arrived, when the United States are placed in a new Situation; when the Adoption of the General Government gives one Sovereign Legislature the sole and exclusive Power of laying Duties upon imports; Your Petitioners rejoice at the Prospect this affords them, that America, freed from the commercial Shackles which have so long bound her, will see and pursue her true Interest, becoming independent in Fact as well as in Name; and they confidently hope, that the Encouragement and Protection of American Manufactures will claim the earliest Attention of the Supreme Legislature of the Nation, as it is an universally acknowledged Truth, that the United States contain within their Limits, Resources amply sufficient to enable them to become a great manufacturing Country, and only want the Patronage and Support of a wise energetic Government.

Your Petitioners conceive it unnecessary to multiply Arguments to so enlightened a Body as the one they have now the Honour of addressing, to convince them of the Propriety and Importance of attending to Measures so obviously necessary, and, indeed, indispensable, as every Member must have observed and lamented the present melancholy State of his Country; the Number of her Poor increasing for Want of Employment; Foreign Debts accumulating; Houses and Lands depreciating in value; Trade and Manufactures languishing and expiring. This being a faint Sketch of the gloomy Picture this Country exhibits, it is to the Supreme Legislature of the United States, as the Guardians of the whole Empire, that every Eye is now directed—from their united Wisdom; their Patriotism; their ardent Love of their Country, your Petitioners expect to derive that Aid and Assistance, which alone can dissipate their just Apprehensions, and animate them with Hopes of Success in future, by imposing on all Foreign Articles, which can be made in America, such Duties as will give a just and decided Preference to their Labours, and thereby discountenancing that Trade which rends so materially to injure them, and empowerish their Country; and which may also, in their Consequences, contribute to the Discharge of the National Debt, and the due Support of Government.

Your Petitioners take the Liberty to annex a List of such Articles, as are or can be manufactured in this Place, on moderate Terms; and they humbly trust that you will fully consider their Request, and grant to them, in common with the other Mechanics and Manufacturers of the United States, that Relief which, in your Wisdom, may appear proper.