To the Honorable the General Assembly of North Carolina:

Your Petitioner Ephraim Dickson respectfully represents unto your Honorable body that one Godwin Cotton late of the county of Edgecombe died in the year ____ leaving a last will and Testament which was duly admitted to probate at May Term 1837 of the court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for the county aforesaid and your Petitioner then qualified as executor thereto. Your Petitioner represents unto your Honorable body that said Cotton by his last will and Testament directed his executor to procure to be emancipated a certain man slave of his, named Eli which your Petitioner is willing and desirous to effect, as well in regard to the last wishes of his Testator as on account of the slave himself; but that Eli having a slave wife and five children residing in the county aforesaid although exceedingly anxious to be emancipated, chooses rather to remain in bondage than to have his freedom, upon condition of his departing from his wife and children and having the state, an indispensable condition required by the existing laws to be imposed upon all slaves liberated by the Inferior Courts. In as much therefore as it is in the power of your Honorable