

government to maintain & them?" Shall this primary end be *frustrated* by a political maxim intended to *promote* it?

BUT from what source does this mighty, this uncontroled authority of the Hoase of Commons flow? From the collective body of the Commons of Great-Britain. This authority must therefore originally reside in them: For whatever they convey to their representatives, must ultimately be in themselves. † And have those, whom we have hitherto been accustomed to consider as our fellow subjects, an absolute and unlimited power over us? Have they a natural right to make laws, by which we may be deprived of our properties, of our liberties, of our lives? By what title do they claim to be our masters? What act of ours has rendered us subject to those, to whom we were formerly equal? Is British Freedom denominated from the *soil*, or from the *People* of Britain? If from the latter, do they lose it by quitting the soil? Do those, who embark, freemen, in Great-Britain, disembark, slaves, in America? Are those, who fled from the oppression of regal and ministerial tyranny, now reduced to a state of vassalage to those, who, then, equally felt the same oppression? Whence proceeds this fatal change? Is this the return made us for leaving our friends and our country—for braving the danger of the deep—for planting a wilderness, inhabited only by savage men and savage beasts—for extending the dominions of the British Crown—for encreasing the trade of the British merchants—for augmenting the rents of the British landlords—for heightening the wages of the British artificers? Britons should blush to make such a claim: Americans would blush to own it.

It is not, however, the ignominy only, but the danger also, with which we are threatened, that afflicts us. The many and careful provisions which are made by the British Constitution, that the electors of members of Parliament may
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§ Blackstone, 124.

† It is self-evident that the power, with relation to the part we bear in the legislation, is absolutely, is solely in the electors. We have no legislative authority but what we derive from them.

Debates of the Commons, vol. 6, p. 75.