

Senator John J. Crittenden (Kentucky) Proposes Resolutions to United States Constitution

A week before Christmas Day, 1860, Senator John J. Crittenden from Kentucky proposed a set of compromise resolutions in the form of an amendment to the United States Constitution. Designed to pull the country back from the brink of war, Crittenden's proposal became the most popular of the sixty suggestions to amend the Constitution over Secession Winter. Like the vast majority of the compromise suggestions they focused on addressing the core of secessionists' demands – protecting the institution of slavery.

Article 1: In all the territory of the United States now held, or hereafter acquired, situate north of 36 degrees 30 minutes, slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, is prohibited while such territory shall remain under territorial government. In all the territory south of said line of latitude, slavery of the African race is hereby recognized as existing, and shall not be interfered with by Congress, but shall be protected as property by all the departments of the territorial government during its continuance....

Art. 2: Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery in places under its exclusive jurisdiction, and situate within the limits of States that permit the holding of slaves.

Art. 3: Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery within the District of Columbia, so long as it exists in the adjoining States of Virginia and Maryland, or either, nor without the consent of the inhabitants, nor without just compensation first made to such owners of slaves as do not consent to such abolishment....

Art. 4: Congress shall have no power to prohibit or hinder the transportation of slaves from one State to another, or to a Territory, in which slaves are by law permitted to be held, whether that transportation be by land, navigable river, or by the sea.

Art. 5: That in addition to the provisions of the third paragraph of the second section of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States, Congress shall have power to provide by law, and it shall be its duty so to provide, that the United States shall pay to the owner who shall apply for it, the full value of his fugitive slave in all cases where the marshal or other officer whose duty it was to arrest said fugitive was prevented from so doing by violence or intimidation,...

Art. 6: No future amendment of the Constitution shall affect the five preceding articles,

SOURCE: *Congressional Globe*, 36th Cong., 2nd Sess., December 18, 1860, pp. 114