

Massachusetts Protests the Mexican War, 1847

Resolved, That the present war with Mexico has its primary origin in the unconstitutional annexation to the United States of the foreign state of Texas while the same was still at war with Mexico; that it was unconstitutionally commenced by the order of the President, to General Taylor, to take military possession of territory in dispute between the United States and Mexico, and in the occupation of Mexico; and that it is now waged ingloriously, - by a powerful nation against a weak neighbor - unnecessarily and without just cause, at the immense cost of treasure and life, for the dismemberment of Mexico, and for the conquest, of a portion of her territory, from which slavery has already been excluded, with the [one] object of extending slavery.

Resolved, That such a war of conquest, so hateful in its object, so wanton, unjust, and unconstitutional in its origin and character, must be regarded as a war against freedom, against humanity, against justice, against the Union, against the Constitution, and against the Free States; and that a regard for the true interests and the highest honor of the country, . . . should arouse all good citizens to join in efforts to arrest this gigantic crime, by withholding supplies, or other voluntary contributions, for its further prosecution; by calling for the withdrawal of our army within the established limits of the United States; and in every just way aiding the country to retreat from the disgraceful position of aggression which it now occupies towards a weak, distracted neighbor.

Senator Edward L. Keyes, April, 1847

Vocabulary

Inglorious: Shameful

Dismember: Break into pieces

Wanton: Cruel

Student Questions

1. In your own words, why does Massachusetts oppose the U.S.-Mexican War? Include at least two issues in your answer.
2. Read the last section that starts with “should arouse all good citizens” and continues to the end of the protest. In your own words, what does this mean? In your opinion, what actions are the Massachusetts legislators suggesting their citizens do to encourage the Federal government to end the War?
3. Would you “join in efforts to arrest this gigantic crime?” Why or why not? If you would, what actions would you take?