

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

Twice during the Revolutionary War George Washington decided on Morristown, New Jersey as the place to station the Continental Army for the winter lull in fighting. There were both military and civilian reasons to choose this area. With the redcoats in firm control of New York City and the Atlantic, it was essential that an inland route connecting rebel held New England with South be kept open and Morristown was positioned just right to keep this link from being severed. Morristown was also the right place because George Washington had won over the local population to support the American cause. He won their support by insisting that his troops respect the property of the people—even the property of Tory sympathizers.

Not only did Washington give strict orders that forbade the Patriot forces from looting—in sharp contrast to the practice of the British and Hessian forces—but he also gave the New Jersey Militia as its major assignment, the mission of protecting the property of New Jersey farmers from the foraging parties of King George's Army. One of the leaders of the New Jersey Militia who carried out the task of protecting property from seizure was a young colonel named Frederick Frelinghuysen, an ancestor of the bill's sponsor.

Therefore it is fitting that that the bill contains a “willing seller” provision to require the government today to respect the property rights of the people just as the cold, hungry and ill-equipped American soldiers did in and around Morristown 233 years ago.

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