

## An Act for the gradual abolition of slavery



Laws of 1799, Chapter 62. In 1799 the New York State Legislature, using Pennsylvania's 1780 act as a model, passed a law to gradually abolish the institution of slavery in the state. Children born to an enslaved mother after July 4, 1799 were "deemed and adjudged to be born free," but an additional provision guaranteed that the enslaved mother's owner was entitled to the service of male children until they reached the age of twenty-eight and female children until they reached the age of twenty-five. The state's leaders hoped to appease slave owners by forestalling the economic effects of lost labor and allowing time for a transition away from slave labor. The act also declared it immediately lawful for the owner of any enslaved person to "manumit such slave by a certificate for that purpose under his hand and seal."

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