Laws about Slavery:

1. English running away with Negros:

This law was passed in March 1661. It indirectly indicated that not all people of African descent were servants for life. But if some black person was considered a servant for life and a white person ran away with him, the White person had to serve extra time in bondage to compensate for his absence and the absence of the Black slave.

1. Negro womens children to serve according to the condition of the mother:

This law was passed in December 1662 with the main motive of discouraging white people/Europeans from having sexual intercourse with black people. It implied that the child of an enslaved mother was a slave for life. Slavery status of children born in the US would be determined by the status of their mother. Any European having sexual intercourse with a black person would have to pay an increased fine.

1. An act declaring that Baptisme of slaves doth not exempt them from bondage

This law was passed in September 1667. This specific law emphasizes the importance of Christianity in the English society. The legislators had decided that slaves that were born in Virginia and Christianized or Baptized could not be free. Owners were encouraged to Baptize their slaves.

1. Negro women are not exempted from tax

This act was enacted in September 1668. This law shows that legislators decided that white women and black women were to be treated differently. Free black women still had to pay taxes and made a different contribution to the colony based on their agricultural work.

1. An act about the causal killing of slaves:

This law was passed in October 1669. Colonial leaders thought that inflicting pain and putting slaves to death was the only way masters could correct slaves, as the terms of slaves could not be extended. This law shows the loss of protection for a slave’s life. It was among the first laws to be passed to restrict the personal rights of black people.

1. Noe negros nor Indians to buy Christian servants

This law was passed in October 1670. It barred free Blacks and Native Americans from purchasing indentured servants (white slaves). However, they could purchase slaves of their own race/kind.

Historical context:

1. Conversion to Christianity was one-way slaves could be free, as it was illegal under British law to enslave Christians. A law in the future (1667) was passed, this stated that Baptism (converting to Christianity) does not guarantee freedom.
2. Elizabeth Key was the child of an African women (slave) and an English politician. After being taken in by her godfather as an indentured servant, she was wrong-fully sold into slavery. In 1655, she sued the owner’s estate and argued that since her father was a free man, she was supposed to inherit her father’s rank/status and be free. A law in the future (1662) was passed which stated that slave children inherit their mother’s status.
3. In 1620s, a man named Anthony (Antonio) Johnson was brought to the US from Angola as an indentured servant. He gained his freedom by the early 1630s and became a very wealthy man (with a lot of land). He was able to own 4 white indentured servants too. A law in the future (1670) stated that free Blacks or Native Americans cannot buy Christian (White servants).
4. Anthony (Antonio) Johnson was able to vote and make use of the legal system and his political power. That way, he was able to acquire a lot of land. However, a law in 1723 was passed, when free blacks were denied the right to vote. This greatly restricted their political power.