

The Declaration of Independence (Made Easy)

***From: <https://pacificlegal.org/the-declaration-of-independence-made-easy/>**

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America:

Sometimes it becomes necessary for a group of people to declare their independence from a government they used to be connected to. They have a right to do so under natural law, though they should respectfully lay out the reasons for the separation.

It is obvious that all people have the right to equal treatment, and that God gives people rights to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness that can be neither taken nor given away.

The only legitimate purpose of government is to make sure that these individual rights are protected, and the only legitimate way for such governments to exist is for the people to consent to their existence.

But, if a government ever fails in its task to protect individual rights, the people have the right to alter or abolish it, and create a new government based on whatever principles they think best.

But we need to be careful not to be too quick to change or abolish long standing governments, even though people will usually continue to suffer under unjust governments rather than take action to change an existing system that they are used to.

But when a government continually violates the rights of the people, clearly and with the purpose of exercising absolute power over them, the people have a right and duty to throw off that government.

That is exactly what has happened here in British America, and which compels us to throw off the government of Great Britain. The current King has continually violated our rights, obviously intending to exercise absolute power over us. These violations include:

- He has refused to approve useful laws.
- He has interfered with the rightful lawmaking of individual colonies.
- He has refused to allow new sovereign political divisions.
- He has called legislative meetings in strange and uncomfortable places.
- He has dissolved the legislatures that tried to oppose his violations.
- He has refused to allow those legislatures to be re-formed.
- He has refused to allow us to make immigrants citizens, or pass laws to encourage them to immigrate here, including the use of public lands.
- He has refused to allow us to pass laws to establish courts.
- He has created a conflict of interest where judges are more loyal to him than the law.
- He has created a vast bureaucracy that harasses and harms our people.

- He has kept armed agents of the state among us, even in times of peace.
- He has made the military independent of and superior to civil power.
- He has subjected us to the laws of a foreign government without our consent:
- He has forced us to house foreign troops in our homes.
- He has removed them from the operation of the criminal justice system.
- For not allowing us to trade with the rest of the world.
- For imposing taxes on us without our consent.
- For taking away our right to have a jury trial.
- For transporting us across the ocean for fake crimes.
- For abolishing the laws and government in a neighboring colony, establishing a false and unjust government, and enlarging its borders as an example of the same unjust measures that could be applied to any other colony.
- For not letting us control our own colonial governments and laws.
- For suspending our legislatures and asserting his power over us.
- He has declared us out of his protection and attacked us.
- He has attacked us on the sea, land, burnt our cities, and killed our people.
- Even now he is transporting foreign armies to these shores to assert power over us and attack us, rivaling even the most cruel acts in history.
- He has forced our fellow citizens to fight against us.
- He has caused domestic unrest among our cities, and prompted violence from indiscriminate savage native inhabitants (historical context being important here).

The entire time we have humbly asked for these actions to stop, but we have been repeatedly ignored. A King who acts this way is not fit to be the ruler of a free people.

We have also told our fellow citizens in Britain about what has been happening here. We have specifically warned them about what the government was up to, and all that has happened since we immigrated here.

We have tried to remind them of our common bonds, but they too have ignored us. Thus, we have to treat them like we would any other people, enemies in war or friends in peace.

Therefore, we as the Representatives of the United States of America, appealing to the judgement of God for the purity of our intentions, do in the name of the people declare that we are independent states that shall have no further political connection with Great Britain.

As independent states we have the power to engage in war, make peace, make alliances, engage in trade, and every other power that independent states possess.

In support of this declaration, relying on the protection of God, we pledge to each other our lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

New Hampshire:

Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton

Massachusetts:

John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island:

Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

Connecticut:

Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

New York:

William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris

New Jersey:

Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark

Pennsylvania:

Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross

Delaware:

Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

Maryland:

Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia:

George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton

North Carolina:

William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn

South Carolina:

Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

Georgia:

Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

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