

# The Declaration of Independence

A Modern Language Version by G. Brent Riggs

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

Every State in America agrees with and declares the following,

When it becomes necessary during the normal course of human history that a specific group of People find it undeniable that they must completely end their relationship with another group of People and assume in this world an equal, separate and sovereign status among nations (to which the Laws of God entitle all mankind) - common and decent respect for humanity compels that group of People to clearly and publicly declare their reasons which have forced them to end the relationship in question.

We hold the following truths to be obvious and undeniable:

**All men are created equal and have been equipped and supplied by the Creator with certain rights that cannot and must not be taken away which include,**

- **Life**
- **Personal freedom (liberty)**
- **And the right to pursue happiness.**

To secure these God-ordained rights, Governments are created and they derive their power and authority from the People they govern, who give them permission to govern, and willingly submit to their authority.

However, when any Government decides to take away the right of personal freedom and the pursuit of happiness, it is the right of the People under that Government to change the Government, or if necessary, get rid of the Government altogether, to recreate a Government which is once again founded upon the principles of freedom, and organized in such a way as to guarantee those freedoms.

Logic, caution and good judgment requires that established Governments should not be altered hastily, without good reason or for temporary circumstances. As well, experience has demonstrated that the People have a tendency to suffer Government evils, rather than change them, as long as the suffering is not too extreme. Why? Because People get used to things being a certain way, and it is difficult and takes great effort to change.

But... when a long series of abuses and stealing of freedoms has occurred by the Government, which are all meant to achieve the goal of putting the People under the rule of violent tyrants, it becomes the right of the People - even more it becomes the duty of the People - to defeat and cast away that Government and create a new Government and new safeguards to protect their freedom.

This is what has happened to the thirteen Colonies who have been patient in this matter of suffering. The Colonies have reached a point where they have no choice but to alter their current system of Government because their freedoms have been abused.

The King of England has a long history of recurring abuses and seizing freedom by violent threats. The King has one single objective: to take absolute, dictatorial control over the Colonies. To prove this, consider the following facts which we make public for the whole world to evaluate:

- The King has refused to sign into law a system where Courts administer justice
- The King has forbid his Governors to pass urgent laws that are extremely important to us. They must delay the laws and get the King's permission first. Even when the Governors suspend the laws, the King still neglects to consider them anyway.
- The King has refused to sign or consider other laws that enact provisions for large groups of People unless those People give up their right to be represented in the Government - in other words, they must give up their freedom to get the King to pass the law... something only a Tyrant would ask the People to do.
- The King has called the Government leaders together in unusual and uncomfortable places, far from any legal resources or Public Records for the sole purpose of making them so tired and uncomfortable, they will simply agree with the King and do what he wants.
- The King has repeatedly shut down the parts of the Government that represent the People. Why? Because they have opposed him when he has abused the rights of the People they represent.
- The King has refused for long periods of time to allow other Representatives of the People to be elected after he himself dissolved their Representation. So the Representatives, who simply cannot walk away and forget those they represent or their duties, have returned to the People to do their service. Meanwhile, the country remains exposed to invasion by other countries, and intense turmoil and uncertainty from within.
- The King has tried to prevent people from coming to live in our States, obstructing Laws that allow foreigners to become citizens, refusing to sign laws that encourage foreigners to migrate to this country, and making new laws that make it more difficult to own or buy land here.
- The King has hindered the administration of law and justice by refusing to allow us to create Courts and appoint Judges.
- The King has appointed his own puppet Judges who will do nothing except what the King says to do. If

not, he will remove them from office or not pay them.

- The King has created many new public offices in order to send large groups of Government officials to harass the People, and take their wealth.
- The King has kept his battle-ready Armies living among us, even in times of peace, without our permission or agreement.
- The King has declared that his Army is not subject to our laws or authority.
- The King has agreed to make us subject to the laws and authority of foreign Governments and disregarding our own laws, he gives his agreement to the foreign law makers.
- The King houses and feeds large Armies within our civilian population.
- The King protects his Armies from any punishment or prosecution by fake trials even if they are guilty of murdering our citizens.
- The King has cut off our trade with other parts of the world.
- The King has imposed taxes on us without our permission or agreement.
- The King often refuses our citizens the benefits of a trial by jury.
- The King will transport our citizens across the ocean and put them on trial for pretend violations of the law.
- The King has abolished our Government in one area only to set up his own Government. Then the King will enlarge the territory this new Government is responsible for, and claim that the citizens of this expanded area are now under the absolute rule of the Government the King set up.
- The King has taken away our own Government agreements, dismissed our most valuable laws, and fundamentally changed the way we govern ourselves by suspending our Legislatures and declaring that the King and his representatives now have the power to make law in all cases.
- The King has disowned and dismissed our Government, declaring that we are no longer under his protection as he wages war against us.
- The King has robbed our overseas trade, destroyed our coastal economy, burned our communities and ruined the lives of our people.
- The King is, at this very moment, sending large Armies of foreign soldiers of death to complete the work of destroying us, of ruining our country and establishing his tyranny over us. The King acts with a cruelty and betrayal that has seldom been matched in even the most barbaric of times... actions that are totally unworthy of a ruler in a civilized world.
- The King has captured our Citizens while out at Sea and has forced them to fight against their own country and to kill their friends and family - or face death.
- The King has stirred up rebellions among us and has gone about trying to convince the violent Indian populations to kill us. The Indians are well known to have only one rule of warfare: kill every man,

woman and child without mercy no matter what their age or physical condition.

At every stage of our suffering and oppression under this King, we have humbly, repeatedly, officially and publicly asked for the ceasing of this oppression, and the correction of these abuses. Our requests have been met only with further injury and insult. A King who has this type of character and morals is defined in only one possible way: a Tyrant, unfit to rule free People.

We have never failed to warn or inform our British brethren. From time to time, we tell them about the attempts of the King and their Government to extend their authority over us. We remind them of the reason why we left England to come to this new country. We have tried to appeal to their own sense of justice and goodness, and have sincerely asked them, based on our common ties of ancestry and family, to not agree with or cooperate with these violations of our freedom which deny that we are a separate Nation. We now consider our brethren in England, as we do all peoples of the world, Enemies if we are at war, and Friends if we have peace.

Therefore, as the Representatives of the United States of America, we, the General Congress, having assembled and prayed to God about the honor and rightness of our conclusions, publish and declare with grave seriousness by the name and authority of the People of these Colonies the following:

The United States have the right to freedom, and ARE free and independent. We denounce and separate ourselves from all authority or allegiance to the King of England and dissolve any political agreements or connections between America and Britain.

As free and independent States, we have the full right and authority to declare War, make peace agreements, build alliances with other countries, establish trade and commerce with the world... and do anything else that free and independent countries have the right to do.

In support of this Declaration, we rely on God to protect and provide for us. Together, we all promise our **lives, wealth** and **honor** as a pledge to uphold and honor this Declaration of Independence.

The 56 signatures on the Declaration:

Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton, William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn, Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton, John Hancock, Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton, Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross, Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean, William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris, Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark, Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry, Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery, Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott, Matthew Thornton

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[brent@brentriggs.com](mailto:brent@brentriggs.com)