The

Declaration of Independence

1776

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UNITED STATES OF CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON
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THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

WHEN in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.——We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.——That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to
right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.——Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.——He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.——He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.——He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.——He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.——He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.——He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be
elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Anni-
hilation, have returned to the People at large for their exer-
cise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all
the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions
within.—He has endeavoured to prevent the population
of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for
Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to
courage their migration hither, and raising the conditions
of new Appropriations of Lands.——He has obstructed
the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to
Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.——He has made
Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their
offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.——
He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither
swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their
substance.——He has kept among us, in times of peace,
Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.——
He has affected to render the Military independent of and
superior to the Civil power.——He has combined with
others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitu-
tion, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to
their Acts of pretended Legislation:—For quartering
large bodies of armed troops among us:—For protecting
them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders
which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these
States:—For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the
world:—For imposing Taxes on us without our Con-
sent:—For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of
Trial by jury:—For transporting us beyond Seas to be
tried for pretended offences:—For abolishing the free
System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, estab-
lishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its
Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit
instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these
Colonies:—For taking away our Charters, abolishing our
most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of
our Governments:—For suspending our own Legislatures,
and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for
us in all cases whatelyver.—He has abdicated Government
here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War
against us.—He has plundered our seas, ravaged our
Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our
people.—He is at this time transporting large Armies of
foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, deso-
lation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of
Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barba-
rous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized
nation.—He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken
Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Coun-
try, to become the executioners of their friends and Breth-
ren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.—He has
excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has en-
deavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the
merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an
undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.
In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for
Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions
have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince,
whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.—And for the support of this Declaration,
with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

**JOHN HANCOCK**

**BUTTON GWINNETT**  
**LYMAN HALL**  
**GEO WALTON.**  
**WM HOOPER**  
**JOSEPH HEWES,**  
**JOHN PENN**  
**EDWARD RUTLEDGE.**  
**THO$ HEYWARD JUN.$**  
**THOMAS LYNCH JUN.$**  
**ARTHUR MIDDLETON**  
**SAMUEL CHASE**  
**WM PACA**  
**THO$ STONE**  
**CHARLES CARROLL OF CARROLLTON**  
**GEORGE WYTIE**  
**RICHARD HENRY LEE.**  
**TH JEFFERSON**  
**BENJA HARRISON**  
**THO$ NELSON JR.**  
**FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE**  
**CARTER BRAXTON**  
**ROB$ MORRIS**  
**BENJAMIN RUSH**  
**BENJA FRANKLIN**  
**JOHN MORTON**  
**GEO CLYMER**  
**JA$ SMITH.**  

**GEO. TAYLOR**  
**JAMES WILSON**  
**GEO. ROSS**  
**CASAR RODNEY**  
**GEO READ**  
**THO M: KEAN**  
**WM FLOYD**  
**PHIL. LIVINGSTON**  
**FRAN$ LEWIS**  
**LEWIS MORRIS**  
**RICH$ STOCKTON**  
**JNO WITHERSPOON**  
**FRA$ HOPKINSON**  
**JOHN HART**  
**ABRA CLARK**  
**JOSIAH BARTLETT**  
**WM WHipple**  
**SAM$ ADAMS**  
**JOHN ADAMS**  
**ROB$ TREAT PAYNE**  
**ELBRIDGE GERRY**  
**STEP HOPKINS**  
**WILLIAM ELLERY**  
**ROGER SHERMAN**  
**SAM$ EL HUNTINGTON**  
**WM WILLIAMS**  
**OLIVER WOLCOTT**  
**MATTHEW THORNTON**