

In Congress, July 4, 1776. The unanimous Declaration by the Representatives of the thirteen United States of America in general Congress assembled.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for ~~a~~one people to ~~advance from that Subordination, indissolve the political bands~~ which they have ~~hitherto remained connected~~ them with ~~another~~, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the ~~separate and equal~~ and independent 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 ~~Change~~separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal ~~and independent~~; that ~~from that equal Creation~~ they ~~derive Rights inherent and are endowed by their Creator with certain~~ unalienable; ~~rights, that~~ among ~~which these~~ are ~~the Preservation of Life, and Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness~~; That to secure these ~~Ends~~rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; — That whenever, any Form of Government ~~shall become~~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 ~~power~~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 shown, 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, ~~begun at a distinguished Period, and~~ pursuing invariably, the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute ~~Power~~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 ~~expunge~~alter their former Systems of Government. The history of ~~his~~the present ~~Majesty, King of Great Britain~~ is a history of ~~unremitting repeated~~ injuries and usurpations, ~~among which no one Fact stands Single or Solitary to contradict the uniform Tenor of the rest, all of which have~~having in direct object, the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world, ~~for the Truth of which We pledge a Faith, as yet unsullied by falsehood.~~

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 ~~utterly~~ 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, ~~and continually~~, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused, for a long ~~Space of~~ time after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise, the State remaining, in the ~~mean Time~~ meantime, exposed to all the dangers of invasion, from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has ~~suffered~~ obstructed the Administration of Justice ~~totally to cease in some of these Colonies, by~~ refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made ~~our~~ Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has ~~created~~ erected a multitude of New Offices ~~by a Self-assumed Power~~, 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 ~~and Ships of War~~ 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 constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended ~~Acts of~~ Legislation;

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us;

For protecting them, by a mock ~~Trial~~ 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 ~~as us~~ without our Consent; — For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by jury;

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended ~~offenses~~ offences;

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing 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 ~~Government~~ Governments;

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, ~~withdrawing his Governors, and~~ by declaring us, out of his ~~Allegiance and~~ 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 complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

~~He~~ He has excited domestic insurrection among us, and has endeavored 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 ~~of existence.~~

He has ~~incited treasonable Insurrections of~~ constrained our fellow citizens, ~~with~~ taken Captive on the allurements of ~~Forfeiture and Confiscation of our Property.~~

~~He has waged cruel War~~ high Seas, to bear arms against human Nature itself, violating its most sacred Rights of Life and Liberty in the Persons of a distant People who never offended him, ~~captivating and carrying them into Slavery in another Hemisphere, or to incur miserable Death, in their Transportation thither. This piratical Warfare, the opprobrium of infidel Powers, is the Warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain.~~

~~He has prostituted his Negative for Suppressing every legislative Attempt~~ Country, to prohibit or to restrain an execrable Commerce, determined to keep open a Market where Men should be bought and sold, and that this assemblage of Horrors might want no Fact of distinguished ~~Die.~~

~~He is now exciting those very People to rise in Arms among us, and to purchase~~ become the executioners of their Liberty of which he has deprived them, friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by ~~murdering the People upon whom he also obtruded them: thus paying off, former Crimes committed against the Liberties of one People, with Crimes which he urges them to commit against the Lives of another~~ their Hands.

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-~~ injuries.

A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a ~~People who mean to be free. — future ages will scarce believe, that the Hardiness of one Man, adventured, within the Short Compass of twelve years only, on so many Acts of Tyranny, without a Mask, over a People, fostered and fixed in the Principles of Liberty~~ free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts ~~of~~ by their legislature to extend ~~an~~ unwarrantable jurisdiction over ~~these our~~

~~States-us.~~ We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here, ~~no one~~ of which could warrant so strange a Pretension. That these were effected at the expense of our own Blood and Treasure, unassisted by the Wealth or the Strength of Great Britain; that in constituting indeed, our Several Forms of Government, we had adopted one common King, thereby laying a Foundation for Perpetual League and Amity with them; but that Submission to their Parliament, was no Part of our Constitution, nor ever in Idea, if History may be credited; and we We have appealed to their Nature, native justice and magnanimity, ~~as well as to~~ and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which ~~were likely to~~ would inevitably interrupt our Correspondence connection and Connection correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity, ~~and when occasions have been given them by the regular Course of their Laws of removing from their Councils, the Disturbers of our Harmony, they have by their free Election, re-established them in Power. At this very Time too, they are permitting their Chief Magistrate to send over not only soldiers of our common Blood, but Scotch and foreign Mercenaries, to invade and deluge us in Blood. These Facts have given the last Stab to agonizing affection, and manly Spirit bids us to renounce forever these unfeeling Brethren.~~ We must endeavor to forget our former Love for them, and ~~to~~ 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 might have been a free and a great People together but a Communication of Grandeur and of Freedom it seems is below their Dignity. Be it so, since they will have it: The Road to Happiness and to Glory is open to us too; we will climb it, apart from them, and acquiesce in the Necessity which denounces our eternal Separation.~~

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 the Authority of the good People of these States, ~~reject and renounce 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 ~~and Subjection to the Kings of Great Britain, and all others, who may hereafter claim by, through, or under them; We utterly dissolve and break off, to the British Crown, and that~~ all political connection ~~which may have heretofore subsisted~~ between usthem and the ~~People or Parliament~~ State of Great Britain, is and ~~finally we do assert and declare these Colonies ought~~ to be free and independent States, totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent states, they ~~shall hereafter~~ 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.