

IN CONGRESS, July 4, 1776.

# 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 to absolute Tyranny, it is their duty to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future Security. — 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 to assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and extensive consequence, unless they shall receive the negative of his Majesty. — He has refused to assent to Acts of the British Parliament designed for the amelioration of our Condition, and for securing to us the same Rights and Privileges which are enjoyed by other free People. — He has called together legislative Bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Records, for the purpose of making them more compliant 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 Annihilation, have constantly been exercised in the most unbecoming manner. — He has endeavored to bring over the Seas large Armies of regular Troops, to surround our Towns, to render the Sea Coast dangerous to Commerce, to have the Threats of Invasion constantly on the Minds of the People, and to excite the jealous Fears of our Neighbors. — He has kept standing Armies in the midst of us, without the Consent of our Legislatures. — He has endeavored to constrain us to Accept of Arms of inferior Quality, and of unserviceable Ammunition. — He has endeavored to keep us longer in War, and to enlarge the Boundaries of our frontiers, by the Pretence of an insupportable and unallowable Claim of a Right to stop on the Sea, and to search the Vessels of our Trade, with all parts of the world. — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent. — For depriving us in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury. — For transporting us across the Seas to be tried for pretended 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 extend it to our Borders, and for receiving the insolent Compliance of our Neighbors as a Justification of those Usurpations. — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally our Forms of Government. — For suspending our own Judiciary, and for establishing by a pretended Authority, a Claim to suspend our Writs of Habeas Corpus, and for dissolving the Rules of the said Writs. — For abolishing the Charters of the said Colonies, and for substituting in their stead a pretended Authority to suspend the said Writs. — For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world. — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent. — For depriving us in many Cases, of the Benefits of Trial by Jury. — For transporting us across the Seas to be tried for pretended 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 extend it to our Borders, and for receiving the insolent Compliance of our Neighbors as a Justification of those Usurpations. — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally our Forms of Government. — For suspending our own Judiciary, and for establishing by a pretended Authority, a Claim to suspend our Writs of Habeas Corpus, and for dissolving the Rules of the said Writs. — For abolishing the Charters of the said Colonies, and for substituting in their stead a pretended Authority to suspend the said Writs.

Without morals a republic cannot subsist any length of time; they therefore who are decrying the Christian religion, whose morality is so sublime and pure (and) which insures to the good eternal happiness, are undermining the solid foundation of morals, the best security for the duration of free governments.

## Founding Father Charles Carroll

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 send and receive Ambassadors and Consuls, to enter into all sorts of War, Peace, Commerce, and all other Things which Free and Independent States may lawfully do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Confidence in the Rectitude of our Cause, we have subscribed our Lives and our Fortunes, and the sacred Honor of our Bodies.

<i>John Hancock</i>	<i>John Adams</i>
<i>Samuel Adams</i>	<i>Richard Stockton</i>
<i>John Jay</i>	<i>George Wythe</i>
<i>George Wythe</i>	<i>Richard Henry Lee</i>
<i>Richard Henry Lee</i>	<i>Thomas Jefferson</i>
<i>Thomas Jefferson</i>	<i>George Mason</i>
<i>George Mason</i>	<i>James Wilson</i>
<i>James Wilson</i>	<i>Benjamin Franklin</i>
<i>Benjamin Franklin</i>	<i>John Adams</i>
<i>John Adams</i>	<i>George Washington</i>
<i>George Washington</i>	<i>John Hancock</i>
<i>John Hancock</i>	<i>Samuel Adams</i>
<i>Samuel Adams</i>	<i>John Jay</i>
<i>John Jay</i>	<i>George Wythe</i>
<i>George Wythe</i>	<i>Richard Henry Lee</i>
<i>Richard Henry Lee</i>	<i>Thomas Jefferson</i>
<i>Thomas Jefferson</i>	<i>George Mason</i>
<i>George Mason</i>	<i>James Wilson</i>
<i>James Wilson</i>	<i>Benjamin Franklin</i>
<i>Benjamin Franklin</i>	<i>John Adams</i>
<i>John Adams</i>	<i>George Washington</i>

