

The Declaration of Independence

(Paraphrased by Robert Wittenstein)

Sometimes it is necessary for a group of people to separate themselves from their government and create a new (separate) country. This is a serious decision so it is important that we, the Thirteen United States of America, spell out the causes that make this necessary.

All men are created equal; God has not selected anyone to rule over us. God has granted all men certain rights, and these rights cannot be taken away by any government. These rights include Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Governments are created by man and get their power from the consent (or permission) of the governed. When a government stops acting in the interest of the people, the people have the right to alter or abolish their ties to that government and form a new government.

Good judgment requires that governments that have served the people for a long time not be cast aside lightly. But when a long train of abuses by a government shows that they do not care about the people they govern, it is the people's right to throw off the government and form a new one.

The Colonies have suffered in this way for a long time. King George III, the King of Great Britain has repeatedly made laws and judgments that injure us and we live under absolute tyranny. To prove this let us list his offences:

He has refused to approve laws that we have passed that will help the Colonies govern themselves.

He has forbidden the Colonies from putting into effect new laws until he approves them. Once we submit them for his approval he ignores them.

He has called lawmakers together at unusual places, at strange times and in uncomfortable places so that we will be fatigued into agreeing with him.

If he doesn't like what one of the Colonies' legislatures has done, he disbands the legislature and sends the lawmakers home. He has done this over and over. When this happens he refuses to let new lawmakers be elected. This leaves our Colonies without a local government to protect us.

He has failed to encourage new people to move here and has refused to open up new areas in the colonies for people to live.

He refuses to appoint judges and once appointed he doesn't give Colonial judges the power to decide cases.

He makes judges do what he wants by making them dependent on him for their salary. Judges are afraid that if they do something he doesn't like he will withhold the judge's pay.

He sends over swarms of government employees who harass us and they are a burden on our taxes.

Even during peacetime, he keeps large armies here without our permission. These armies must be housed and feed from our tax money.

His army refuses to obey the police force and they break laws when they want. If they commit a crime he protects them with mock military trials where they are always found innocent.

He has cut off our trade with the rest of the world. He insists that everything we purchase we buy from England. He also insists that all our goods are sold back to England even when we could get better prices somewhere else.

He taxes us without our permission.

He arrests us and sends us back to England for trial for made-up crimes.

He threatens to abolish all our laws and appoint a harsh military government to rule over us if we continue to fight for our rights.

He has declared that we are not under his protection any longer and he wages war against us.

He captures our ships, burns our towns, and destroys the lives of our people.

He is sending even larger armies to the Colonies to make war against us.

He gives guns to the Indian savages and encourages them to attack us.

Through all of this, we have been patient and loyal subjects. But each time we have asked for him to help us, we get further injury as the answer. He is a tyrant and is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

The Parliament has also taken away our rights and they do not listen when we protest.

Therefore, it is necessary that we announce our separation. If Great Britain wants to be an enemy then we are at war. If they want friendship then we will have peace.

Therefore, we the representatives of all the United States appeal to God and by God's power, and for the good of the Colonies, we declare that these United Colonies are and will be free and independent states. We separate ourselves from Great Britain. We do not have any allegiance to them from now on.

We now have the full power of independent countries. We have the power to wage war, conclude peace and make alliances with other countries.

With a firm belief that what we are doing is right in the eyes of God, we all pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.