

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, so that these shall secure to them the most extensive, safe and happy Liberty. Prudence in such a Case will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all reformations of ancient Governments proceed by slow Steps, and are the result of the Wisdom of a great Number of long-existing Men, rather than the Passions of a few, or the Infringements of一时's Impetuosity. — But when a long Train of Abuses, and Usurpations, growing out of the same Origin, leads to such a Degree of Oppression, and a more violent Form of Government, that the People are obliged to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, the Declaration of Independence is not only a just and necessary Measure, but is a right, which no Government ought to deny the People. — They have the Power to alter or to abolish any Form of Government in the State, in such Manner as they shall think proper.

John Hancock

John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, James Otis, John Jay, William Brattle, James Chalmers, John Fenwick, Joseph Galloway, Andrew Lewis, Thomas Mifflin, George Ross, Robert White, Richard Stockton, George Taylor, George Walton, James Wilson, George Wythe, William D. Bassett, George Burdett, George Heyliger, William Hooper, Joseph M. Iredell, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Lee, James McHenry, George Mason, John Matthews, William Moultrie, George Nicholas, James Osgood, Thomas Paine, John Penn, James Smith, Thomas Stone, George Tucker, Thomas Young.