

Excerpts from the United States Declaration of Independence

Adopted in Philadelphia, PA on July 4, 1776

Excerpt #1: Historical Imperative

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes...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

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.*

Excerpt #2: Values

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.*