

## Comparing American & Hawaiian ‘Declarations’

Being in the middle of the Pacific, and unknown to the western world at the beginning of the American Revolution and the signing of the Declaration of Independence, folks in Hawai‘i may not feel connected to the American Revolution and its history.

2026 is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of America’s Declaration of Independence. It is interesting/appropriate to analyze, evaluate, and compare the similar/different circumstances, context, and text of America’s Declaration of Independence (1776) and subsequent US Constitution (in operation March 4, 1789) with the Hawaiian Kingdom’s Declaration of Rights (1839) and subsequent Hawai‘i Constitution (1840 - that has the 1839 Declaration of Rights as its Preamble).

The following are only some of the kinds of comparisons that you might consider, under the theme of similarities and differences in the circumstances, context, and text of these documents:

- In America, the people forced the change; in Hawai‘i, the King and Chiefs initiated the change.
- In America, the changes were made through revolution and war (with thousands of lives lost, lasting over 8 years (1775-1783)); in Hawai‘i, the changes came through voluntary and peaceful recognition of ‘rights’ (that was

bloodless, with immediate change).

- Each country’s ‘Declaration’ has similar references to the Creator and God:
  - America’s Declaration of Independence (1776): “all men are ... endowed by their Creator”;
  - Hawai‘i’s Declaration of Rights (1839): “God hath made of one blood all nations of men”.
- Each ‘Declaration’ has similar statements of equality:
  - America’s Declaration of Independence (1776): “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal”;
  - Hawai‘i’s Declaration of Rights (1839): “God ... has given alike to every man and every chief of correct deportment ... protecting alike, both the people and the chiefs of all these islands”.
- Each ‘Declaration’ has similar statements of individual rights:
  - America’s Declaration of Independence (1776): “all men are ... endowed ... with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”;
  - Hawai‘i’s Declaration of Rights (1839): “These are some of the rights ...

life, limb, liberty, freedom from oppression; the earnings of his hands and the productions of his mind”.

- Each country has a similar transition in how the people were viewed and treated, from being strictly subjects of a King to citizens of a country with established rights in written documents and laws.
- Each has similar governance mechanism/documentation that allowed each to join the family of nations (with a written Constitution), with Hawai‘i’s happening only 13-years from having a written language (with the standardized Hawaiian written alphabet approved on July 14, 1826).

Making these comparisons of ‘Declarations’ (with notably similar context and text) will help link Hawai‘i to the American Revolution during the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the adoption of the American Declaration of Independence.

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This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org)

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