

## Declaration of Independence ... Self-Evident Truths

In drafting the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson noted it was “not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject”.

The Declaration of Independence expresses the ideals on which the United States was founded and the reasons for separation from Great Britain. In it, the signers of the Declaration of Independence claimed that there are five self-evident truths:

### All Men Are Created Equal

Jefferson’s famous statement about equality uses language influenced by George Mason’s Virginia Declaration of Rights, “That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights ...”

The Declaration of Independence was a call for the right to statehood rather than individual liberties.

John Adams reinforced this, saying, “It really means little more than that We are all of the same Species: made by the same God: possessed of Minds and Bodies alike in Essence: having all the same Reason, Passions, Affections and appetites. All Men are Men and not Beasts: Men and not Birds: Men and not Fishes.”

### People are Endowed with Unalienable Rights

Jefferson’s preamble is also a promise of liberty. He and others believed that people have certain unalienable and inherent rights that come from God, not government, or come simply from being human.

The framers believed that natural rights are inherent in all people by virtue of their being human and that certain of these rights are unalienable, meaning they cannot be surrendered to government under any circumstances.

### Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness are Unalienable Rights

In 1774, Thomas Jefferson wrote, “The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time; the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them.”

Adams reinforced this saying, “the happiness of society is the end of government ... the happiness of the individual is the end of man.”

### Governments are Created to Secure these Rights

Daniel Shute noted on May 25, 1768, “The design of mankind in forming a civil constitution being to secure their natural rights and privileges, and to promote their happiness,”

“Civil government among mankind is not a resignation of their natural privileges, but that method of securing them”.

### Governments Get Their Power from the Consent of the Governed

Daniel Shute noted (in 1768), “A Community having determined that to commit the power of government to some few of their number is best, the right the some few can have to it, must arise from the choice of the whole”.

### Effect of the Declaration

By issuing the Declaration of Independence, adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, the 13 American colonies severed their political connections to Great Britain. The Declaration summarized the colonists’ motivations for seeking independence.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the War of the American Revolution, Great Britain officially acknowledged the United States as a sovereign and independent nation.

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)

### Presented by: The Hawaii Society Sons of the American Revolution

<https://hawaiiisar.org/> For more:  
<https://tinyurl.com/msruw8md>