A DECLARATION
BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
IN GENERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED.

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, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes; and accordingly all Experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the Forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long Train of Misfortunes, and Misgovernment, producing nothing but Oppression, shall have累了 that People shall be rendered so bitter and destitute of all all Universities, and hath now at length, in spite of all Opposition, resolved to change their Form of Government, the History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of continued Conduct and Inhumanity, and Injuries, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid World.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good.
He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance; unless suspended in their Operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.
He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large districts of People, unless those People would relinquish the Right of Representation in the Legislature, a Right inhumane in itself, for it is the very Object of Government, first instituted, to establish this Righf.
He has called together Legislative Bodies at Times unseasonable, and unjust, and from the Deposit of their public Records, for the sole Purpose of adjourning them without Consent of his Majest.
He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing measures in this State or in another, or for no other Reason than that they refused to vote Money for his Purses.
He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause Elections of Representatives: whereby the Legislative Power was incapable of Annihilation, has returned to the People at large for their exercise: the State remaining in the mean Time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without, and Convulsions within.
He has endeavored to prevent the Population of these States, for the sole Purpose of subverting the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass Laws for the Promotion of Science and Art.
He has refused, in many Cases, to pass Laws for the public Good, and to support and defend them.
He has called together and assembled, in remote and unseasonable Times, Members of Congress for the sole Purpose of廢除 the Laws for the support and protection of Industry.
He has prevented the Collection of the Public Revenue in a regular and orderly Manner, amounting to a neglect of the Public Business.
He has refus'd for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause Elections of Senators and Representatives, thereby rendering the Legislative Body incapable of performing the essential Duties of Government.
He has compelled the Members of Congress to attend his Examinations before Committees, for经查 the Funds of the public Treasury, and paid to the Officers of the United States for their Pains and Services.
He has withdrew the Protection of our Laws, and Assistance of our Armies, from the States that submitted to the Strokes of their Tyrant.
He has kept among us, at large Times, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our Legislatures.
He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.
He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:
For quartering large Bodies of Armed Troops among us.
For protecting them, with a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States.
For cutting off our Trade with all Parts of the World.
For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent.
For depriving us, in many Cases, of the Benefit of Trial by Jury.
For transporting us beyond our Seas to be tried for pretended Offences.
For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an arbitrary Government, and enlarging its Boundaries, so as to render it at once an Example and Instrument for introducing the same absolute Rule into these Colonies.
For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and changing our Government.
For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all Cases whatsoever.
He has abridged Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People.
He is at this Time, transporting large Armies of Foreign Mercenaries, to compleat the Works of Death, Destruction, and Tyranny, already begun with Circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, far surpassing the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized Nation.
He has constrained our Fellow Citizens taken Captive on high Seas, to bear Arms against their Country, to become the Executioners of their Friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.
He has excited domestic Insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the Inhabitants of our Frontiers the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of War is An undistinguished Destruction, of all Ages, Sexes and Conditions.
In every Stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated Injury. A Picturè of the whole Character is marked by every Step which they have taken towards tyranny. Is this the Way to secure our Liberties?
Nor have we been wanting in Atentions 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 ventured our lives in the Teeth of all our common Interest to avert the Ultsion, which we knew was inevitable, our Consciences and Correspondence. They too have been deaf to the Voice of Justice and of Conscience. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the Necessity, which deems it our Duty, to judge the Publick Security of this Country, in such a Way, as to hold the evil of Mortality, on one Side, and the evil of Tyranny on the other, to be equal.
We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions, and of Authority, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that the Word of All Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all Political Connections between them and the State of Great-Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, negotiate Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

Signed by ORDER, and IN BEHALF OF THE CONGRESS,
JOHN HANCOCK, President.

ATTEST,
CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.