

## [Resolution of Independence by the United States]

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, do, in the Name, 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 they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection 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, contract 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.

John Hancock  
President from  
Massachusetts

*Georgia*  
Button Gwinnett  
Lyman Hall  
George Walton

*North Carolina*  
William Hooper  
Joseph Hewes  
John Penn

*South Carolina*  
Edward Rutledge  
Thomas Heyward, Jr.  
Thomas Lynch, Jr.  
Arthur Middleton

*Maryland*  
Samuel Chase  
William Paca  
Thomas Stone  
Charles Carroll  
of Carrollton

*Virginia*  
George Wythe  
Richard Henry Lee  
Thomas Jefferson  
Benjamin Harrison  
Thomas Nelson, Jr.  
Francis Lightfoot Lee  
Carter Braxton

*Pennsylvania*  
Robert Morris  
Benjamin Rush  
Benjamin Franklin  
John Morton  
George Clymer  
James Smith  
George Taylor  
James Wilson  
George Ross

*Delaware*  
Caesar Rodney  
George Read  
Thomas McKean

*New York*  
William Floyd  
Philip Livingston  
Francis Lewis  
Lewis Morris

*New Jersey*  
Richard Stockton  
John Witherspoon  
Francis Hopkinson  
John Hart  
Abraham Clark

*New Hampshire*  
Josiah Bartlett  
William Whipple  
Matthew Thornton

*Massachusetts*  
Samuel Adams  
John Adams  
Robert Treat Paine  
Elbridge Gerry

*Rhode Island*  
Stephen Hopkins  
William Ellery

*Connecticut*  
Samuel Huntington  
William Williams  
Oliver Wolcott  
Roger Sherman

### What It Means Resolution of Independence

The final section declares that the colonies are "Free and Independent States" with the full power to make war, to form alliances, and to trade with other countries.

**rectitude** *rightness*

### What It Means Signers of the Declaration

The signers, as representatives of the American people, declared the colonies independent from Great Britain. Most members signed the document on August 2, 1776.