



NEWSLETTER

June 2026 ISSUE#: HV028

Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley is a steady source of news to heal the accelerating erosion of our fundamental freedoms nationally and locally.

Embrace our First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Source: <https://billofrightsintstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>

Kind regards,
Publius Bonhomme Richard, Publisher & Co-Editors

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Email us at: info@mercervethepeople.com

Please email us to be included for future newsletters.

Printed copies of the newsletter will be made available at Rosedale Mills and local library. Any other suggested location(s) please let us know.

Call for Contributors!

MercerWe the People of Hopewell Valley is looking for contributors to write articles, especially informing the community about what is happening at local meetings. If you're interested in writing for us about that or any other topic, whether it is monthly or as needed, please reach out to us at info@mercervethepeople.com

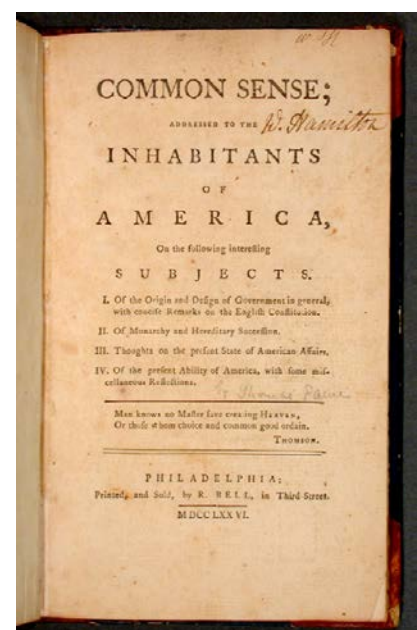
How Thomas Paine's 'Common Sense' Helped Inspire The American Revolution

The 47-page pamphlet took colonial America by storm in 1776 and made critical arguments for declaring independence from England.

By Patrick J. Kiger originally published on history.com (June 28, 2021)

Even after armed hostilities broke out between the American colonists and British forces in 1775, many prominent colonists seemed reluctant to consider the idea of actually breaking away from Britain and instead insisted that they were still its loyal subjects, even as they resisted what they saw as its tyrannical laws and unfair taxation.

But a single 47-page pamphlet—the 18th-century equivalent of a paperback book—did a lot to quickly change that, and shift American sentiment toward independence. *Common Sense*, written by Thomas Paine and first published in Philadelphia in January 1776, was in part a scathing polemic against the injustice of rule by a king. But its author also made an equally eloquent argument that Americans had a unique opportunity to change the course of history by creating a new sort of government in which people were free and had the power to rule themselves.



Scan of cover of *Common Sense*, the pamphlet. No alterations were made to the scan. Date: Original work was during the year 1776. <https://thomaspaine.org/major-works/common-sense/>

"We have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest purest constitution on the face of the earth," Paine wrote. "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

Centuries before the existence of the internet, *Common Sense* managed to go viral, selling an estimated 500,000 copies. By the end of the Revolutionary War, an estimated half-million copies were in circulation throughout the colonies.

By promoting the idea of American exceptionalism and the need to form a new nation to realize its promise, Paine's pamphlet not only attracted public support for the Revolution but put the rebellion's leaders under pressure to declare independence. And even after the victory over the British, Paine's influence persisted, and some of his ideas found their way into the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Who Was Thomas Paine and Why Did He Write 'Common Sense'?

Paine's provocative pamphlet was the first real success in his life. Born in 1737 in England to a financially struggling family, he had to quit school at age 13 to labor as an apprentice in his father's corset shop. He did a brief stint as a sailor on a privateer ship at age 20 and tried and failed to start a craftsman business. He managed to land a government job as an excise tax collector but was fired twice, the second time after leading an unsuccessful campaign to get higher wages for him and his colleagues. His failed efforts to lobby Parliament left him with a dim view of the British system of government.

Bereft of prospects at age 37, he convinced Benjamin Franklin, whom he'd met in London, to give him a letter of recommendation, and emigrated to America in hopes of catching a break at last.

When Paine arrived in America in 1774 and found work as a journalist in Philadelphia, the colonies already were in tumult over opposition to Britain's attempts to impose new taxes and restrict trade.

"Paine witnessed it all, and thought, these people are ripe for a revolution," explains Harvey J. Kaye, author of *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America*.

In 1775, with the encouragement of Franklin and Benjamin Rush, the physician and activist who became a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Paine began writing a pamphlet that would urge Americans to go beyond merely resisting British authority. "He encouraged them to realize that they weren't British, that they were Americans," Kaye explains.

Paine originally wanted to call his pamphlet *The Plain Truth*, but Rush, who informally served as his editor, persuaded him to name it *Common Sense* instead, according to Stephen Fried's biography of the physician. That phrase fit one of Paine's most important notions, that Americans should trust their feelings, rather than get bogged down in abstract political debates.

"The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes," Paine wrote. "They are the guardians of his image in our hearts."

Key Points Made in 'Common Sense'

Here are some of Paine's key points:

- **Government's purpose was to serve the people.** Paine described government as a "necessary evil," which existed to give people a structure so they could work together to solve problems and prosper. But to do that, it had to be responsive to people's needs. The British system, Paine argued, failed at that, because it gave the monarchy and nobles in Parliament too much power to thwart the people's elected representatives. "The constitution of England is so exceedingly complex, that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies, some will say in one and some in another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine," Paine wrote.
- **Having a king was a bad idea.** Paine didn't just find fault with British rule of the colonies. He ridiculed the very idea of having a hereditary monarch at all. "In England a king hath little more to do than to make war and give away places, which in plain terms, is to impoverish the nation and set it together by the ears," Paine wrote. "A pretty business indeed for a man to be allowed eight hundred thousand sterling a year for, and worshipped into the bargain! Of more worth is one honest man to society and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived."
- **America as the home of the free.** Paine refuted the notion that Americans should be loyal to a mother country that he considered a bad parent. "Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families," he wrote. Besides, he argued, America's real connection was to people everywhere who yearned to escape oppression. "This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe," Paine proclaimed. "Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still."
- **America had a rare opportunity to create a new nation based on self-rule.** As Paine saw it, both Americans and the British knew it was inevitable that the colonies would break free. "I have never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries, would take place one time or other." And that time had come. America had raw materials, from timber and hemp to iron, and the skills that it needed to build and equip an army and navy for its defense. Just as important, the individual colonies had the potential to put aside differences and form a powerful nation. But they needed to do it quickly, before the population grew to a point where new divisions might develop. The moment in history was "that peculiar time, which never happens to a nation but once," he wrote.

- **A strong central government was needed.** Paine envisioned that the new nation would have a strong central government, with a constitution that protected individual rights, including freedom of religion. "A firm bargain and a right reckoning make long friends," he argued.

Why Did Paine's Pamphlet Become So Influential?

Jefferson considered Paine to be the best writer of the Revolution, according to Kaye. But it wasn't just his arguments that appealed to people. Unlike other American leaders who were well-educated landed gentry, Paine could reach into his own humble background to find his voice.

"He knew people weren't thinking in the abstract," Kaye explains. "Paine wrote to his peers, in a language everyone could understand."

Just as importantly, Paine understood that philosophical abstractions weren't as powerful as emotion and experience. Instead, Paine urged Americans to embrace "common sense," and trust their own feelings about what was right and just and how the country should be run, just as they did with other everyday decisions. "They recognized themselves in that argument," Kaye says.

"I attribute its success to two things," Jack Fruchtman, Jr., author of *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Paine* and *Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom*, explains. "First, it was the first published piece that I know of advocating separation from the British Empire. And second, there were pirated copies circulating, a rather common phenomenon in the 18th century before copyright laws." In addition, he notes, "it was often read aloud, which helped spread its popularity and notoriety."

The popularity of *Common Sense* made it tough for colonial leaders to take a halfway stance against the British. As John Adams wrote to his wife in April 1776: "Common Sense, like a ray of revelation, has come in seasonably to clear our doubts, and to fix our choice."

As Thomas Jefferson biographer Joseph J. Ellis has written, *Common Sense* "swept through the colonies like a firestorm, destroying any final vestige of loyalty to the British crown." Within a few months of its publication, the Continental Congress instructed each colony to draft new state constitutions, an act that set the colonies clearly on the path to declaring independence.

Thomas Jefferson, who had received an early copy of *Common Sense* in February 1776, began writing a formal document in June that would announce to the world that the new nation had been created...

Access the full article: <https://www.history.com/articles/thomas-paine-common-sense-revolution>

Common Sense pamphlet by Thomas Paine (January 10 1776), primary source:

Document Excerpts

"But there is another and greater distinction for which no truly natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is the distinction of men into **KINGS** and **SUBJECTS**. Male and female are the distinctions of nature, good and bad the distinctions of Heaven; but how a race of men came into the world so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth inquiring into, and whether they are the means of happiness or of misery to mankind.

...

These portions of scripture are direct and positive. They admit of no equivocal construction. That the Almighty hath here entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the scripture is false. And a man hath good reason to believe that there is as much of kingcraft as priestcraft in withholding the scripture from the public in popish countries. For monarchy in every instance is the popery of government.

To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of right, is an insult and imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his own family in perpetual preference to all others for ever, and tho' himself might deserve some decent degree of honours of his contemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them. One of the strongest natural proofs of the folly of hereditary right in Kings, is that nature disapproves it, otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule, by giving mankind an Ass for a Lion.

...



Photo: Thomas Paine Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

In the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense: and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves: that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

...

Small islands not capable of protecting themselves are the proper objects for government to take under their care; but there is something absurd, in supposing a Continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems. England to Europe: America to itself.

...

I shall conclude these remarks, with the following timely and well-intended hints. We ought to reflect, that there are three different ways by which an independancy may hereafter be effected; and that one of those three, will, one day or other, be the fate of America, viz. By the legal voice of the people in Congress; by a military power; or by a mob: It may not always happen that our soldiers are citizens, and the multitude a body of reasonable men; virtue, as I have already remarked, is not hereditary, neither is it perpetual. Should an independancy be brought about by the first of those means, we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their portion of freedom from the events of a few months. The reflection is awful, and in this point of view, how trifling, how ridiculous, do the little paltry cavilings of a few weak or interested men appear, when weighed against the business of a world.

...

WHEREFORE, instead of gazing at each other with suspicious or doubtful curiosity, let each of us hold out to his neighbor the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing a line, which, like an act of oblivion, shall bury in forgetfulness every former dissention. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be heard among us, than those of a good citizen; an open and resolute friend; and a virtuous supporter of the RIGHTS of MANKIND, and of the FREE AND INDEPENDANT STATES OF AMERICA."

Explore the full document (read online): <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/147/147-h/147-h.htm>

In This Issue:

- [Election](#)

- Local Feature (By HVRA): Primary Election: Early Voting Ends Tomorrow May 31! And Election Day Is June 2nd 2026

- [Local News](#)

- Local Feature (By American Anonymous): Politics, Religion, And Brains, Oh My!
- Local Feature (Letter To The Editor By Sylvia Kocses): Connecting Across Differences To Preserve Our Constitutional Republic

- [Education](#)

- [Election Integrity](#)

- Local Feature (By Mark Demo): The Coming Collapse Of Local Government In New Jersey: Retirements, Patronage, And The Talent Crisis

- [ICYMI](#)

- [Public Corner](#)

- [TruthBTold](#)

- [At the Movies, Bookstores](#)

- [We the People of Interest](#)

- Local Feature: Our New Jersey Signers Of The Declaration Of Independence

Election

Primary Election: Early Voting Ends Tomorrow May 31! And Election Day Is June 2nd 2026

By HVRA

Please vote in the June Primary and write in **Steven Niederer** for the Hopewell Township Committee. Early Voting sites are open Saturday from 10am to 8pm and Sunday from 10am to 6pm. The closest Early Voting site in Hopewell Valley is the Pennington Firehouse at 120 Broemel Place.

Election Day is **Tuesday, June 2nd** and the polls are open from 6am to 8pm. Click [HERE](#) to find Early Voting, Election Day, and Vote by Mail Secure Drop Box locations. If you are a Mercer County resident, you can visit any Early Voting site in the county, but on election day, you must go to your district polling location. If you don't know your polling location, you can find it on your sample ballot or by searching using this [LINK](#).

Are there other candidates running?

YES! There is a full slate of candidates running in Mercer County, depending on your district (residents in Hopewell Valley are in Congressional District 12). You can find your sample ballot [HERE](#) and information about each candidate can be found at mercergop.org.

**Write in for Hopewell Township Primary
Tuesday June 2
Early Voting Tuesday May 26 to Sun May :**

Committee 3 Year Term Vote for Two	
1F	John R. HART, Jr. Endorsed Mercer County Regular Organization Republican
NO PETITION FILED	
	Steven Niederer WRITE-IN
Write - In ↑ WRITE-IN	



250th ANNIVERSARY
FAMILY PICNIC
Hosted by the Mercer County Republican Committee

DATE: Saturday, June 27th
****Rain or Shine****

TIME: 12:00 to 5:00 P.M.

LOCATION: VFW Post 491
9 Fisher Place
Yardville, NJ 08620

Assorted Picnic Foods! Best Chili Contest with Prizes!
Quoits Tournament, Potato Sac Races,
Egg Throwing Contest and so much more!
****Bring your own lawn chairs and blankets. Beer on tap****

Ticket Information
Price per person: \$65
Children 3 to 12: \$20
Children 2 & under: Free

Buy tickets here → 

****Tickets are on sale until June 20th.****
PD FOR BY MCRC, P.O. BOX 10535 HAMILTON, NJ 08650

Mercer County Republican Committee Family Picnic

<https://www.facebook.com/MercerGOP>

<https://www.instagram.com/realmercernjgop>

<https://x.com/realMercerGOP>

Local News

Stay Connected With HVRA

Follow us on Facebook for updates on upcoming events and important information: <https://www.facebook.com/HVRAGOP>

Join Or Renew Your HVRA Membership

Become a part of the Republican Association united around addressing issues affecting our valley electorate, promoting responsive transparent government, and electing conservative candidates to represent and meet the needs of all Hopewell Valley residents.

Sign up or renew today at:
<https://hvrageop.org/hvra-membership/>

COMMUNITY ★ CIVILITY ★ CONSERVATIVE VALUES

JOIN OUR CAUSE



Hopewell Valley Republican Association

Join your local Republican association united around addressing issues affecting our valley electorate, promoting responsive transparent government, and electing conservative candidates to represent and meet the needs of all Hopewell Valley residents.

Promoting accountability, transparency, and fiscal responsibility in local government

Educating residents on important local issues

Building an enduring, vibrant volunteer network

Empowering conservative candidates and helping them win elections

Sponsoring fundraising events to support local candidates and issues

Re-establishing fair and free elections

Protecting our school system and supporting our local police

Make a difference for your Hopewell Valley community

JOIN THE HVRA TODAY!
www.hvrageop.org



Politics, Religion, And Brains, Oh My!

By American Anonymous

When people on one side of the political aisle describe extreme behaviors of those on the opposite side, they sometimes use the term brainwashed. For example, this is prevalent in conversations about the protests we've seen... Ice Out, No Kings, and Free Palestine to name a few, and the demonstrations that descended into murkier, contradictory ideologies regarding Venezuela, Iran, and LGBTQ+ rights. It is also prevalent in conversations about MAGA. Everyone seems to think that the other side is brainwashed.

When my 80-year-old mother and I watch news coverage of wild-eyed Americans hurling themselves at armed ICE officers, or women screaming in the faces of girls protesting biological males in women's sports, the word comes up. Having lived through the civil unrest of the 1960s, Mom sees the obvious parallels but notes a distinct personality this time around... "more sinister" to use her words, and "giving Jonestown vibes."

(Jim Jones described his cult's philosophy as apostolic socialism and moved his headquarters to escape "systemic racism" in the US before committing mass murder/suicide in 1978.)

"What's with these women demanding biological males compete in women's sports? Are they brainwashed or something?" Mom wondered aloud at the TV.

I asked if she was aware of how many women who lean far-left politically also engage in New Age spiritual practices for relaxation and wellness (meditation, sound healing, reiki, moon circles, Tarot, psychic readings, crystal work, etc.). Her answer: "What's that got to do with it?"

In my opinion, a lot. It explains some of the mystifying behaviors and ideological positions we are seeing in far-left politics these days. It also helps to answer the questions many long-term Democrats are asking, wondering... what has happened to their party? How has it shifted so far left ideologically from where it stood in the 1990s and early 2000s?

According to the Pew Research Center's ongoing Religious Landscape Study:

- In 2007, 74% of Democrats identified as religious (predominantly Christian) and 19% as religiously unaffiliated (a small portion of those being atheist/agnostic, and the majority identifying as "spiritual, but not religious").
- By 2024, the numbers had changed significantly: 50% of Democrats identified as religious (still predominantly Christian) and 40% as religiously unaffiliated.
- **The study notes: "Democrats maintain a wide advantage among religiously unaffiliated voters.** Religious "nones" have become more Democratic over the past few decades as their size in the U.S. population overall and in the electorate has grown significantly. While 70% of religiously unaffiliated voters align with the Democratic Party, just 27% identify as Republicans or lean Republican.

It's the growth of the unaffiliated/spiritual-not-religious crowd that interests me; having been one of that crowd in the past, I know that's often how New Agers describe themselves. And I remember hearing consistent messaging in classes, meditations, books, videos, shamanic journeys: No borders. No genders. We are all One. Sometimes the messaging is received directly during personal meditation. Sometimes it is channeled by a leader while an audience takes notes. It is an appealing, loving message that attracts and holds trusting, kind-hearted people. For those suffering trauma, loneliness or confusion, it can provide strong motivation for self-righteous militancy, even to the point of political violence.

It is problematic to define what exactly is New Age... in essence it is a billion-dollar industry that offers a mixed bag of practices from myriad cultures and religions like Hinduism, mystic traditions of the Abrahamic religions, and Satanism (many New Agers are blissfully unaware that the Church of Satan's leader, Anton Levay, publicly complained in the 1980s that the rising New Age movement was stealing its practices from Satanism). New Age often includes Native American traditions, Shamanic techniques once reserved for only the most experienced tribesmen, alongside Wicca, divination traditions like Tarot, psychic readings and mediumship, with a heavy dose of pop psychology and self-love work thrown in.

There is something for everyone in New Age, since there is no founding doctrine such as the Bible, Torah, or Koran, and therefore no firm set of rules. The basic tenet of New Age spirituality is similar to the Wiccan Rede: "Do what you want, as long as you don't harm anyone."

The problem with that tenet is... who gets to decide if you're harming anyone? Well, you do.

"No judgment" is a favorite slogan amongst New Agers. One only needs to contemplate the existence of groups like NAMBLA (North American Man Boy Love Association) to know that there are people who think they aren't hurting anyone (they think it's love). Therefore, the Wiccan Rede is not a tenet by which a functioning society can order itself. But someone out there seems determined to try and make it so.

Which brings us to the subject at hand: brainwashing. Thanks to the Internet and pop-culture icons like Oprah Winfrey, one no longer needs to skulk into the weird bookstore on the edge of town to learn guided meditations for meeting your spirit guides, communicating with deceased loved ones, casting spells to manifest love and success... it's all at your fingertips now.

On Oprah's website oprahdaily.com, she sells the Thoth Tarot Deck by Aleister Crowley (a famous Satanist who chronicled sexual abuse of women and boys, and was suspected of ritualistic murder), alongside charming products like Tarot for Kids. You can hire a witch on Etsy to cast spells for you. As one journalist found out, people messing around in this space can bring unintended consequences; her article on casting a hex on Charlie Kirk was published on September 8, 2025, just three days before his assassination. It's an eerie coincidence at best; I'd bet even the witch was surprised at her effectiveness.

A foundational technique in New Age spirituality is transcendental meditation: it quiets the brain, relaxing to the point of being in a theta state, where one is open and highly suggestible to messaging received during the session. Any messaging received is believed to come from God, your spirit guides, angels, or other entities like the Pleiadeans (wise alien life forms). The messaging and social media comments tied to transcendental meditation videos tend to offer the No borders, No genders, All One mantra in various forms.

Whether or not you believe the spiritual realm exists, the important reality we should all be paying attention to is that large numbers of Americans (many of them young, impressionable women) are consuming these materials. They are sleeping to the sounds of "healing frequencies" on YouTube channels, and receiving "downloads" from these mysterious sources. While these sources may seem laughable, we shouldn't wave them away as harmless; such this relaxing Awaken Your Soul video which has over one million views so far. Many videos in this realm reach tens of millions. Their creators are often nameless and based in countries outside the U.S.

The predominant thinking in New Age is that mankind is experiencing an Awakening, in which the old paradigm is deconstructed and those of us who are awakened construct a brave new world of borderless, genderless unity. On the surface, it's all peace, love and community. I noticed an uptick in the "No Borders, No Genders" messaging around 2023 as the Presidential election loomed. And naturally, a vote for Kamala Harris was essential to "bring the light" and usher in this new era of One-ness. That's when I started to smell a rat; it felt like being surrounded by a 2024 version of Iran's young women in 1979 who gleefully welcomed the Ayatollah, not realizing the grim reality that was about to hit them.

It was noteworthy how often Kamala Harris and her supporters (with Oprah front and center among them) used the word “light” during her campaign. Democratic policies bring the light, Republican policies bring the darkness. In the New Age your awakened peers are the Light, your pesky judgmental parents are the darkness (and it’s okay to cut them off because they are toxic). Emails are signed with *Love and Light*. Conflicts are squashed with the words *Love and Light*! You are led to feel that you are literally fighting in the war of good vs. evil, and your spirit guides are urging you to bring the light and fight the darkness. (Now in 2026 it is notable how the word “light” has been replaced by “fight”.)

To be fair, the same messaging is used in far-right circles, especially those of the evangelical Christian variety. It is no secret that Christians feel they are battling Satan in the political battles our country faces. Clearly there is evidence of possible brainwashing on both sides, but I contend the numbers are much higher amongst left-leaning voters, because of the Pew Research Center’s statistics and the clear prevalence of New Age spiritual practices amongst left-leaning voters.

We can’t know for sure if the globalist messaging spread through New Age materials is coming from God, Satan, aliens, our own minds, political enemies in other nations, the Illuminati, online scammers... we just don’t know. We do know that the New Age practices and messaging to which I’m referring predominately exist in the space of the U.S. and western Europe, where it is being heavily consumed and it is growing. New Age is rejected outright by countries with strong religious traditions; Islamic countries, for example. Hmmm... don’t they call us *The Great Satan*? Perhaps they know something we don’t about all these spiritual materials so readily available to us in the West. One can only ask oneself: who might benefit from no borders, no genders, and no judgment? *Who indeed ...*

Letter To The Editor: Connecting Across Differences To Preserve Our Constitutional Republic

Originally published in MercerMe (May 15 2026)

To the Editor:

The United States is experiencing a crisis of political polarization, lack of civil discourse and confusion about our national identity that many people fear is tearing our country apart. In our community, where yard signs say “Hate Has No Home Here”, there have been swastikas drawn on school property, profane stickers about elected officials on public signs in Hopewell Borough and posts on Facebook that call fellow citizens a Nazi. This complex problem is driven by political, psychological and technological forces and the crisis impacts individuals, our community and our nation. It is dividing Americans in ways that fosters dysfunctional governance and threatens the future of our constitutional republic.

MercerMe reported on April 24, 2026 (After 52 Weeks, ‘Democracy on the Corner’ Continues in Hopewell Borough) about residents who have faithfully gathered in visible demonstrations of resistance as a means to draw awareness to their cause and concerns about our federal government. The article stated that these gatherings offer “comfort, connection and solidarity among like-minded neighbors”.

For the same number of weeks that Democracy on the Corner has been protesting the Hopewell Valley Republican Association chose a different pathway to secure a better future for our country and our children. While it is less visible than Democracy On the Corner it is a pathway committed to promoting civic friendships and connecting across differences to work together with all neighbors to achieve shared goals. This effort hopes to unite members of our community (liberal, progressive, conservative or unaffiliated) who want to reduce toxic polarization, develop skills to change the way we engage with disagreements and differences and restore civil discourse and bipartisan politics.

We need both activism and meaningful dialogue to move our nation from unhealthy conflict to constructive change. Together we can work for a better future where American political institutions operate in the spirit of citizenship and common purpose, with vigorous policy debates and people treating each other with dignity and respect – even if we disagree on how to solve the complex problems we face as a nation.

Many Americans, sometimes called the exhausted majority, believe that there is far more common ground than what we see from observing our politics, our news, and social media posts from conflict entrepreneurs. Most of our genuine controversies do not pit a good argument against a bad one but instead they pit two legitimate values against each other. For example, one person’s safety versus another person’s freedom or community welfare versus individual



Courageous Conversations BOOK DISCUSSIONS

Read books written by reasonable people and engage with others across differences with meaningful civil discourse.

The United States is experiencing a crisis of political polarization, incivility, and distrust that many fear is tearing our country apart. This complex problem is driven by political, psychological, and technological forces and the crisis impacts individuals, our community and our nation.

WHAT CAN ORDINARY PEOPLE DO?

The Hopewell Valley Republican Association invites you to five book discussions/conversations about practical steps to:

1. foster civic friendship and reduce toxic polarization
2. develop skills to change the way we engage with disagreement and differences
3. create a citizen-led movement to restore civil discourse and bipartisan politics

Thursday, April 23 @ 7:00 pm
Section I - Chapters 1,2,3

Thursday, May 7 @ 7:00 pm
Section II - Chapters 4,5,6

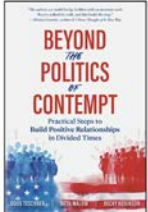
Thursday, May 21 @ 7:00 pm
Section III - Chapters 7,8,9,10

Thursday, June 4 @ 7:00 pm
Section IV - Chapters 11,12,13,14,15

Sunday June 14 @ 7:00 pm
Section V- Chapters 16,17,18

BEYOND the POLITICS of CONTEMPT:
Practical Steps to Build Positive Relationships in Divided Times
Doug Techner, Beth Mallow, & Becky Robinson (BraverAngels.org)
Meeting Location: 7 Weidel Drive, Pennington, NJ

Other Books for Future Discussions
How to Raise a Citizen • Lindsey Cornack
The Righteous Mind • Jonathan Haidt
The Two-Parent Privilege • Melissa S. Kearney



HVRA Hopewell Valley Republican Association
For more information, please contact us at hvrpagop.org
Paid for by the Hopewell Valley Republican Association, PO Box 332, Marlboro, NJ 08053

rights. The question becomes how do we navigate the genuine tension between things we both care about? How can we shift from the need to win to a desire to understand? How can we forge a path forward where we engage in conversation and share viewpoints freely instead of name-calling, shutting people out, “us versus them” demonization, hate and even violence?

All movements for change start local. Hopewell Valley needs as many of us as possible to join together to help diminish the politics of contempt and division including elected officials, PTO members, religious leaders, faculty and staff at our schools and candidates in our Primary election. Author Jonathan Haidt calls this approach a “collective action response”.

To facilitate this positive change, the Hopewell Valley Republican Association sponsors a Courageous Conversations Book Discussion Group. Four high-quality books were selected that are intentionally bipartisan and written by reasonable authors. The conversational model provides a welcoming environment where everyone can respectfully discuss the concepts and ideas presented in these books. The first selection, **Beyond the Politics of Contempt: Practical Steps to Build Positive Relationships in Divided Times** (<https://beyondthepoliticsofcontempt.com/>) provides a roadmap to bring us out of the chaos and back to a civic culture built on kindness, dignity, respect, hope and gratitude.

The book discussion group follows a clear code of conduct (respectful dialogue, active listening, evidence-based discussion, inclusivity and safety, shared time, constructive disagreement) and operational norms (come prepared having read the material, stay on topic). The Hopewell Branch of the Mercer County Library has multiple copies of the book selections available for checkout. The next meeting is Thursday, May 21 (Chapters 7,8,9,10) at 7:00 pm at 7 Weidel Drive in Pennington. All are welcome. Future dates are Thursday, June 4th and Sunday, June 14th at 7:00pm.

A book discussion group won't be highly visible on a street corner or have cars honking horns or people waving signs and dressing up as frogs in demonstrations of resistance. But it is happening here and the Hopewell Valley Republican Association believes it is important for the community to know.

Sylvia Kocsis
Pennington resident and member of the Hopewell Valley Republican Association

Access the Letter to the Editor: https://mercerme.com/connecting-across-differences-to-preserve-our-constitutional-republic/?utm_source=Memberful+Main+List+-+Mercer+Me&utm_campaign=6079348fc3-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_b51cf3ae42-6079348fc3-563818349

Courageous Conversations Book Discussion Series: HOLD THE DATE September 24 2026 6:00-8:00PM

Author Lindsey Cormack will be speaking at the event.

READ THE BOOK *HOW TO RAISE A CITIZEN* and *HOLD THE DATE*.

Courageous Conversations
BOOK DISCUSSIONS

Read books written by reasonable people and engage with others across differences with meaningful civil discourse.

The United States is experiencing a crisis of political polarization, incivility, and distrust that many fear is tearing our country apart. This complex problem is driven by political, psychological, and technological forces and the crisis impacts individuals, our community and our nation.

WHAT CAN ORDINARY PEOPLE DO?

The Hopewell Valley Republican Association invites you to a book discussion group designed to connect people across the political divide and to help build a culture of kindness, respect, dignity, and hope.

IF YOU COULD HELP EASE THE DIVISIONS IN OUR COUNTRY, WOULD YOU DO IT?

Thursday, September 24th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

PLEASE HOLD THE DATE

How to Raise a Citizen (*And Why It's Up to You to Do It*)
By Lindsey Cormack
Lindsey Cormack will be speaking at the event!
Location TBD
(MCL has copies of the book available to check-out)

Other Books for Future Discussions
The Righteous Mind • Jonathan Haidt
The Two-Parent Privilege • Melissa S. Kearney

HOW TO RAISE A CITIZEN
(*And why it's up to you to do it*)

HVRA Hopewell Valley Republican Association
For more information, please contact us at hvragop.org
Paid for by the Hopewell Valley Republican Association, PO Box 332, Telford, NJ 08850

What Your Brain Looks Like When You Hate Someone Lovers overlook flaws, while haters manufacture them.

By Arsh Sarao originally published in *The Epoch Times – Virtue Medicine Series Part 18* (May 16 2026)

When you catch a glimpse of someone you hate, your brain generates a very unique neural pattern.

Hate increases activity in brain regions involved in aggression and strategic evaluation, while silencing empathy. It's like your brain beginning to prepare to “tackle” a person. The more you hate someone, the stronger the signals.

Even though we all may have experienced hate, our deepest self is incompatible with it, Steven Stosny, therapist and founder of Compassion Power, told *The Epoch Times*. “If hate becomes chronic, we lose our humanity.”

The Neuroscience of Hate

The brain's hate “switch” prioritizes aggressive behavior and negative judgment.

Hate selectively deactivates the right superior frontal gyrus—the area involved in regulating impulsive responses and understanding others' feelings.

This very restricted deactivation in the hater's brain cuts off the neural "brakes" that keep aggressive impulses in check, turning the hater irrational and making them fixated on the target.

Mitchell Landers, a postdoctoral scholar in the department of psychology at the University of California, told The Epoch Times that both love and hate involve intense assessment of the other person, but in opposite directions.

Both lovers and haters experience temporarily impaired judgment under intense emotions, which explains behaviors such as "lovers overlooking flaws, and haters manufacturing them," Landers said.

Hate activates several regions in the brain's outer and inner layers—especially, the putamen and insula.

The putamen prepares you to act, and the insula acts as a sensor. When hijacked by hate, those regions can compel a hater to take retaliatory actions, such as confronting and harming the target of their hatred.

Hate self-reinforces. The more you hate, the more your brain is wired to hate—it's like a low-dose poison that quietly erodes empathy.

How Hate Poisons the Hater

Hate can switch off the brain's empathy circuitry. One study found that participants who were exposed to hate speech about minority groups become less empathetic to the suffering of not just the minority group, but of other people as well, demonstrating that hate spreads.

Over time, diminishing empathy leads to a collapse of compassion.

The hated person's very existence is the hater's core problem, Landers said. "When you've estimated that someone has a negative association value—that their welfare runs contrary to yours—it makes sense that concern for their suffering would diminish."

A person is not just unable to empathize with a person's pain, but becomes numb or even starts feeling good about it, he said.

Hatred's close connection with aggression and hostility puts the hater at risk of mental and physical health issues. People who are hostile experience breakdown in relationships and are therefore more stressed and more prone to depression.

Physically, hate-driven behaviors such as anger and aggression trigger the release of stress hormones, which affect the immune system and lead to inflammation. Stress hormones suppress the activity of natural killer cells, which impairs a person's ability to fight infections, including cancer.

Stress response linked to anger and aggression also impairs your blood vessels' ability to relax properly, which is critical for good circulation. This disruption is one of the primary drivers of stroke and cardiovascular diseases.

A meta-analysis published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology found that anger and hostility increase coronary heart disease risk by 19 percent in healthy people and increase the chance of poor prognosis by 24 percent in patients with existing heart conditions.

What makes this poisoning emotion stick?

Where Does Hate Come From

Hate is often rooted in unresolved anger. Landers' 2025 research sheds light on how the transition from anger to hatred happens.

Anger is "a bargaining mechanism," Landers said. You feel angry when you assume the relationship is worth saving. When someone doesn't appear to care as much as you believe they should, anger bargains by pushing others to change how they treat and value you.

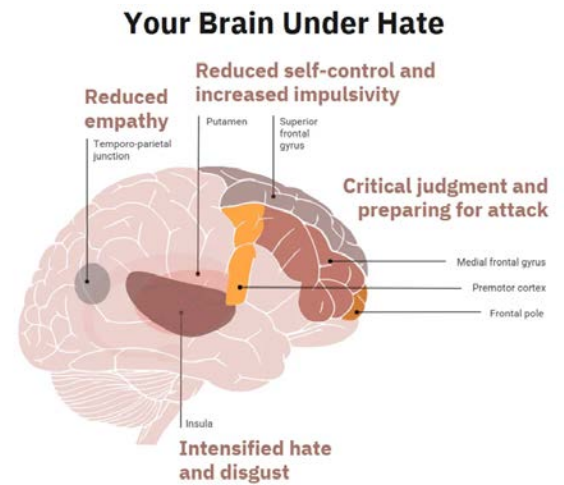
"That's why angry people want to talk, want explanations, want apologies," he said.

When anger repeatedly fails to repair the relationship, it begins to transition toward hate.

Hate assumes the relationship is not worth saving, so it seeks to neutralize that very person. From the hater's point of view, the hated person's very existence makes the hater's life worse.

"No amount of talking will change the fact that a romantic rival exists, or that a competitor took your promotion, or that someone's presence in your community fundamentally threatens your interests," Landers said.

Hate turns off only when the target is sufficiently distanced or depowered, he said. The challenge is that achieving these



Source: "Neural correlates of hate," Semir Zeki et al, PLoS One. 2008. "Exposure to hate speech deteriorates neurocognitive mechanisms of the ability to understand others' pain," Agnieszka Pluta et al, Sci Rep. 2023.

outcomes often involves force or aggression. The aggressive, hostile actions that hatred drives one to take ultimately reinforce the feeling of hate, Landers said.

This self-reinforcing quality creates a hate trap.

Hate often stems from helplessness, Jessica Russo, a licensed clinical psychologist, told The Epoch Times.

When you register someone as a threat, there is a subconscious sense of weakness and helplessness. To counter the threat, people may use a “shield of hate” to protect themselves.

“Hate is a very intense kind of shield,” Russo said, but by using hate to protect oneself, people end up making themselves even more vulnerable.

“We need to get to the bottom of what is behind that, what they’re trying to protect themselves from,” she said.

Russo believes that compassion can dismantle the shield of hate by restoring hope and removing darkness. The antidote is to rebuild exactly what hate erodes.

A Cure for Hate

Humans possess a core value: an instinctive sense of self-worth rooted in the belief that every person is “a child of God.” Acting from this belief humanizes self and others, while hate dehumanizes both, Stosny wrote in his book “Manual of the Core Value Workshop.”

Therefore, to eliminate hate, one must cultivate its opposite: compassion.

“Compassion and hate are incompatible; the more we do one, the less able we are to do the other,” Stosny said.

Compassion is a very broad concept, and everyone has their own understanding of it. But generally, it is about recognizing that humans are flawed and suffering, yourself and others included, which allows you to understand and extend sympathy to everyone.

Many people mistakenly believe that compassion is dismissing bad behavior, Stosny said. However, compassion isn’t about forgiving behavior, but about understanding the hardships that lead others to behave badly.

“Compassion reduces but never tolerates or excuses bad behavior—because behavior that violates humane values is self-destructive,” he said.

Compassion begins with the self—and compassion for self and others go hand in hand.

When someone fails to practice self-compassion by not understanding and healing their own emotional hurt, that discomfort turns into resentment and anger, Stosny said, and the person starts blaming others for their pain.

To catch unprocessed anger or resentment before it hardens into hate, Stosny recommends watching for early warning signs:

- Intolerance of hurt or emotional discomfort
- Coping with the internal discomfort by blaming it on others
- Inability to see other perspectives

It’s critical to break the hate loop—to pull the brain out of a state of being threatened or powerless, Russo said. She recommends beginning by imagining feeling compassion toward what threatens you or discomforts you. Then try to break down the unhealthy perspective that’s fueling hate. Ask yourself: “Alright, so if I’m feeling hatred, that means I’m feeling threatened. What am I so scared about?”

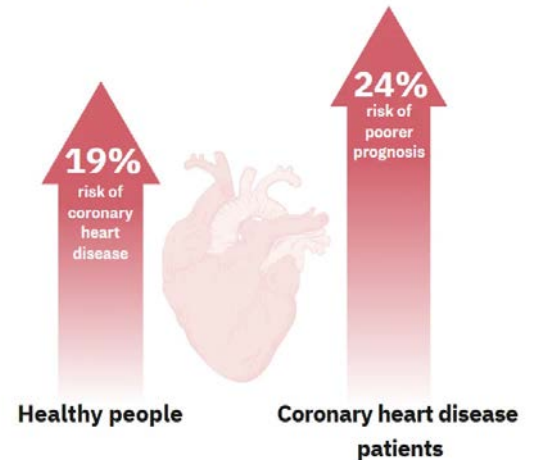
Fundamentally, hate comes from an “I am the victim” mentality, Yashpal Jogdand, a social psychologist, told The Epoch Times.

Those who believe that they are the exclusive victims tend to express stronger hate, he said. It is therefore important to recognize that “both sides have suffered,” thereby breaking the cycle of blame and guiding people toward empathy.

When we embrace the other person as part of us, “we start seeing our shared humanity in everybody around us.”

Access the article: https://link.theepochtimes.com/mkt_app/health/what-your-brain-looks-like-when-you-hate-someone-5979990?utm_medium=app&c=share_pos1&pid=iOS_app_share&utm_source=iOS_app_share

Anger and Hostility Increase Risk of Coronary Heart Disease



Source: “The Association of Anger and Hostility With Future Coronary Heart Disease: A Meta-Analytic Review of Prospective Evidence,” Yoichi Chida and Andrew Steptoe, Journal of the American College of Cardiology. 2009.

Contact Your Legislator To Stop The Interstate Gender Transition For Minors And Late-Term Abortion Provider Immunity Act

By New Jersey Family Policy Center

ACTION ALERT: Tell Your Legislators To VOTE NO On Senate Bill 2260 And Assembly Bill 2218

A bill moving through the Legislature would create sweeping legal shields for late-term abortion providers and for medical professionals who perform gender-transition procedures on minors—even when those minors might be brought across state lines without parental consent.

1. The bill undermines parental rights and creates a dangerous loophole for minors.

New Jersey law currently does not allow minors to receive puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, or irreversible surgeries without parental consent. But Part 6 of S2260/A2218 creates a legal shield that could prevent New Jersey from cooperating with other states **even when a minor is transported across state lines by an adult who is not their parent**, and even when medical interventions are performed **without** parental consent.

If a doctor prescribes these drugs or performs these procedures on an out-of-state minor under those circumstances, this bill could block any investigation or accountability. That is an extraordinary and dangerous loophole.

Supporters of the bill claim it only protects “legally protected health-care activities.” But S2260/A2218 would still block out-of-state investigations that could hold providers accountable if they fail to obtain the required parental consent before removing the healthy breasts or genitals of a minor.

2. This bill shields abortion providers from accountability.

It is deeply ironic that New Jersey’s Attorney General has used the power of the state to issue subpoenas against a pregnancy resource center simply because it does not perform abortions—yet if S2260/A2218 becomes law, that same Attorney General would be required to block subpoenas from out-of-state law-enforcement agencies investigating clinics or doctors who may intentionally end a child’s life if that baby is born alive during an abortion.

Supporters claim this bill only protects “legal medical care” in New Jersey and that doctors are already required to care for a baby born alive. But S2260/A2218 would **block any out-of-state investigation** that could hold a doctor accountable if they fail to provide that care. It effectively gives abortion providers a legal shield to end the life of a child outside the womb after a failed late-term abortion.

With the Luminosas Clinic now opening in Hudson County and offering abortions in all trimesters (and gender transitioning procedures on minors), this is not hypothetical. Late-term procedures increase the likelihood of a child being born alive—and under this bill, any resulting death of a baby during an abortion would be shielded from out of state investigations.

3. New Jersey’s Attorney General has already politicized this issue.

While the bill does not technically prevent New Jersey law enforcement from reviewing an allegation made by another state, there is real cause for concern. The Office of the Attorney General has already politicized the abortion issue and targeted pro-life nonprofits. **It is reasonable to fear that the Attorney General would be unwilling to allow any investigation that could expose or embarrass the state’s extreme abortion policies.**

In practice, out-of-state allegations could be minimized, delayed, or discouraged—not because the facts are unclear, but because the political implications are inconvenient.



4. Free speech could be restricted and even made criminal

If Planned Parenthood or other clinics and doctors claim their reputation was harmed or their business suffered financial loss because of someone's actions — including speech — it would be considered "interfering with reproductive health care activities," and a person could be charged with a fourth-degree crime. Criminalizing speech based on subjective perception is flatly unconstitutional. It will chill public debate and give government officials the power to decide which viewpoints are allowed. No free society can function under a standard where honest criticism becomes a criminal offense.

TAKE ACTION NOW

Tell your legislators to **Vote NO on S2260/A2218**. Protect Free Speech. Protect Parental Rights. Protect Children. Protect Accountability in New Jersey.

Access the article and TAKE ACTION: <https://advocacy.charityengine.net/Default.aspx?isid=3043>

PILOT Resource: A Programmatic Examination Of Municipal Tax Abatements

By State of New Jersey Office of the State Comptroller - A. Matthew Boxer, Comptroller (August 18 2010)

Residents of the State of New Jersey

This report reviews the usage of redevelopment and rehabilitation tax abatements by New Jersey municipalities and provides recommendations for improvements.

This study was undertaken to examine broad issues underlying tax abatement policy and implementation and to inform taxpayers about this complex development tool. We analyzed available data, reviewed relevant standards and obligations, conducted survey interviews, and assembled secondary research to develop findings about selected abatement practices. Our objective was to pull together disparate information and ideas, identifying weaknesses in the system. While specific agencies or municipalities received attention in our review and sometimes are mentioned directly, the purpose was not to document a particular failing but illuminate vulnerabilities or questionable circumstances that call for greater accountability and transparency.

Tax abatements result in significant foregone revenue and introduce tax inequities that deserve closer scrutiny. The recommendations in this report are geared toward broad-based changes that will help to ensure more open and fair investment of taxpayer dollars and better decisions and outcomes in the future.

A. Matthew Boxer - State Comptroller

Access the full report: https://www.nj.gov/comptroller/news/docs/tax_abatement_report.pdf

Local Events

Things to do. Check out some upcoming local events:

- Hopewell Valley Vineyards (Pennington NJ) events: <https://www.hopewellvalleyvineyards.com/>
- Needle Creek Farm Brewery (Pennington NJ) events: <https://www.needlecreek.com/event-page>
- Washington Crossing State Park NJ events: <https://www.wcpa-nj.com/events>
- Washington Crossing Historic Park PA events: <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/events/>
- Independence Day Celebration 2026: <https://www.washingtoncrossingpark.org/event/living-history-july-fourth-2026/>

And there is across the country:

Salute to America 250 Celebration & Fireworks - Find a Celebration: <https://www.freedom250.org/celebration>

Education

What's Happening In HVRSD Schools?

HVRSD Board Of Education Meeting May 18, 2026

By The Wall of Ed

Agenda: <https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/hvrSD/Board.nsf/Public#tab-meetings>

Meeting Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilOgP4rNNIM>

Next Meeting June 15, 2026 (Regular and Business Organization) at the HVRSD Board Office, 425 Main St, Pennington, NJ

Note: At the BOE meeting, the *Mahmoud v. Taylor* Supreme Court ruling was mentioned at timestamp 1:30:47. It was mentioned the district would be very transparent with course material offerings. The below article is being re-published as a resource for this matter.

Making Sense Of *Mahmoud v. Taylor*

The Supreme Court's ruling likely won't end classroom content controversies—because defining “curriculum” isn't as clear-cut as SCOTUS seems to assume.

By Robert Pondiscio originally published in *American Enterprise Institute* (March 3 2025)

The Supreme Court's decision last week in *Mahmoud v. Taylor* was cheered by conservatives and religious liberty advocates. The 6-3 ruling found that a Maryland public school district violated the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause by refusing to let parents opt their elementary school children out of lessons featuring LGBTQ-themed storybooks. The Court reaffirmed a bedrock principle going back a century to *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*: Parents cannot be forced to have their children exposed to material that conflicts with their religious beliefs, certainly not without notice and the opportunity to opt out.

But don't be surprised if *Mahmoud* proves to be less than the last word. Not because SCOTUS's legal reasoning is muddled—it's not—but because of the way reading is taught in many elementary classrooms. The gap between how courts think “curriculum” works and how it's actually implemented in elementary classrooms is vast. And that means schools will likely keep finding themselves on the receiving end of angry phone calls, and possibly lawsuits, from parents blindsided by what their children bring home in their backpacks.

In *Mahmoud*, the books in question weren't part of the Montgomery County school district's core curriculum. A few years ago, the MCPS school board “determined that the books used in its existing [English language arts] curriculum were not representative of many students and families in Montgomery County because they did not include LGBTQ characters,” according to the majority opinion written by Justice Alito. The board decided to introduce “LGBTQ+-inclusive texts.” Five books for younger students were at issue in *Mahmoud*: *Intersection Allies*, *Prince & Knight*, *Love, Violet*, *Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope*, and *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*.

As described in the majority decision, the school board suggested “that teachers incorporate the new texts into the curriculum in the same way that other books are used, namely, to put them on a shelf for students to find on their own; to recommend a book to a student who would enjoy it; to offer the books as an option for literature circles, book clubs, or paired reading groups; or to use them as a read aloud.” This is easily recognizable as the “reader's workshop” model, which relies on students self-selecting books from a “classroom library” (not to be confused with a larger, stand-alone school library) – bins filled with dozens of books, even hundreds of them, on shelves in a child's classroom, sorted by reading levels, genres, or themes, and providing time for both independent and guided practice. In the workshop model, teachers lead “mini-lessons” on a reading “skill” or “strategy” from a common text. But students typically practice on books they choose themselves—on the theory that this generates kids' interest and engagement.

The workshop model also relies heavily on whole-class read-alouds, which is the principal source of the conflict in *Mahmoud*. The Court looked askance, for example, at a 2022 professional development session that advised teachers to correct students who make “hurtful comments” on transgender issues. “When we're born, people make a guess about our gender and label us ‘boy’ or ‘girl’ based on our body parts,” they were advised by the district to explain. “Sometimes they're right and sometimes they're wrong.” A guidance document also encouraged teachers to “disrupt the either/or thinking” of their students about biological sex. Initially, MCPS allowed parents to opt out of read-alouds featuring the controversial books, but later rescinded that option. It was this shift—the loss of notice and opt-out rights—that the Court found constitutionally unsupportable: Parents were denied the opportunity to withhold consent on religious grounds.

What counts as “instruction?”

“The books are unmistakably normative,” SCOTUS ruled. “They are designed to present certain values and beliefs as things to be celebrated, and certain contrary values and beliefs as things to be rejected.” Neither did the Justices accept Montgomery County's argument that its “LGBTQ+-inclusive” instruction was mere “exposure to objectionable ideas” or as lessons in “mutual respect.” The storybooks “unmistakably convey a particular viewpoint about same-sex marriage and gender. And the Board has specifically encouraged teachers to reinforce this viewpoint and to reprimand any children who disagree. That goes beyond mere ‘exposure.’”

The line the Court drew seems bright: If schools use contested materials instructionally—especially in ways that make exposure unavoidable—parents have a right to know and a right to say no. Montgomery County's approach and guidance seems heavy-handed and didactic. But in common practice, the line between “instructional” and “not instructional” is far from clear. Many elementary classrooms today don't assign novels or shared texts; the teacher teaches literacy *skills*, not books. A question surely on the minds of teachers, administrators, and school board members who've read the decision is one the Court left unaddressed and may not even be aware of: is the line crossed only when controversial books are read aloud? Or is their mere presence in a classroom library enough to require parental notification, since students might choose them as part of their ELA

instruction? No consideration in either the majority decision or the dissent authored by Justice Sotomayor seems to have been given to the difference between a classroom library or a school's main library, or (apart from a whole-class read aloud) how a controversial book might end up in a child's hands.

From a judicial perspective, it might matter whether a book is “assigned” and exposure compelled. But from a parent’s perspective, it probably doesn’t. If a first grader comes home with *It’s Okay to Be Different* or *I Am Jazz*, parents are unlikely to distinguish between something their child picked up on her own and something their teacher handed them. Nor should we assume that the difference is meaningful. The classroom library didn’t build itself. Teachers or other school district personnel chose what went on those shelves. And students made their selections during instructional time, under adult supervision, as part of a structured literacy program. In other words, “We didn’t assign it” may not be much of a defense.

Most non-educators—including parents, policymakers, and judges—think of “curriculum” as a list of books that every child reads. Something on the syllabus. A shared text. Yet that’s not how ELA works in many classrooms anymore. Although the workshop model has come under fire in recent years, it’s still a common, even dominant approach to elementary reading instruction across the country.

The Family's View	"My child brought home a book that conflicts with our religious beliefs. I had no idea this kind of material was being used at school. No one told me. Why is this even in the classroom?"	That concern is legitimate, especially when the book was chosen during school hours, from a curated selection, and potentially discussed with a teacher—even informally.
The School's View	"No one assigned the book. The student selected it during independent reading. It's part of a diverse, age-appropriate classroom library. We support student choice."	Also a fair point—under current practice, especially in districts that use the reader's workshop model and emphasize engagement through student choice.

When a child chooses a book that contradicts the family's religious or moral beliefs, it may not have been “assigned” per se but that doesn’t mean it’s neutral. It was placed there for a reason. And when it’s chosen during class time, under the implicit encouragement of an adult, it becomes part of the instructional environment. But does *Mahmoud* require parental notification of its simple existence in that environment? SCOTUS appears not to have weighed this possibility, which is far more likely than a controversial book being chosen for a whole-class read aloud.

This is where *Mahmoud* and classroom practice potentially—and predictably—collide. The Court treated the issue as one of compelled exposure. But in an ELA class built on student choice, what counts as “compelled”? If you make available a limited, curated set of books is that choice is free or coerced?

In the final analysis, there is a foreseeable mismatch between the expanded, ambient definition of curriculum inside schools and the traditional, content-focused definition held by the public. The Court didn’t resolve that mismatch. It barely acknowledged it and, indeed, might not be entirely cognizant of it. But it will almost certainly keep generating friction.

Access the article: <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/making-sense-of-mahmoud-v-taylor/>

SCENARIO	Instructional control	PARENTAL NOTIFICATION	
		Advisable?	Required? (Post-Mahmoud)
Teacher reads LGBTQ-themed book aloud and leads discussion	High Structured, directed, instructional use	Yes	Likely required
Teacher recommends or guides student to LGBTQ-themed book during independent reading	Moderate Instructional influence	Yes	Probably required
Book is available in classroom library, not promoted or assigned	Low Passive availability	???	???
Student checks out LGBTQ-themed book independently from school library	Minimal to none	No	Probably not required

District Watch: Exposing The Radical Takeover Of America’s Schools

By Victoria Manning originally published in Restoration News (May 28 2026)

Restoration News’ new project exposing destructive policies, leftist school board activism, and the fight to protect parental rights.

Government schools across the nation are failing to educate children—and undermining the vital role of parents in raising the next generation.

Restoration News’ newest project, **District Watch**, exposes those responsible. We’re shining a light on school district policies that put parents in the dark—and calling out the ideologues responsible.

We’re going state-by-state and district-by-district to root out the evil lurking behind schoolhouse doors. We’ve uncovered destructive policies—in small towns and big cities alike—that harm children. Such as policies encouraging children to undergo “social gender identity” transitioning at school without the knowledge of parents. Counselors are providing mental health therapy to children without asking parents. Teachers are **sexualizing children as young as kindergarten**.

These policies are deliberately crafted by far-left school board officials and employees, most with ties to the teachers’ unions, working to promote a radical agenda instead of improving schools.

Take Zyahna Bryant, a far-left “fat liberation” and Black Lives Matter activist who made national news after pushing a race hoax at the University of Virginia. Bryant falsely accused a white student, Morgan Bettinger, of making racist comments then

demanding she face discipline—and university faculty obeyed. Bettinger fought back with a First Amendment lawsuit that the university settled out of court after investigations exposed the truth.

But leftists often fail up. The Dove Beauty company quickly hired Bryant as an ambassador for their “fat liberation campaign” to glamorize obesity.

Bryant is also an advocate of reparations for young black youth leaders and called American policing “a pillar of white supremacy.” Yet in November 2025, she was elected to the Charlottesville City School Board in Virginia and is now one of seven board members responsible for the education of thousands of students in public schools.

In Wisconsin, the Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD) which serves around 10,000 students, pushes narratives of white privilege and offers “gender support plans.” ECASD emphasizes hiring based on race saying they “will seek out and increase hiring of a diverse staff, including active recruitment of underrepresented groups and more equitable hiring practices, so that the diversity in our district staff and leadership is reflective of the diversity of the students we serve.”

Several ECASD School Board members, like Tim Norden, have publicly stated they support keeping student gender identity transition secrets from parents.

Assistant Superintendent of Strategy for the Madison Metropolitan School District in Wisconsin, Cindy Green, believed that her district had too many resources that were “uplifting whiteness” and called for “anti-racism” curriculum. She also pushed “equitable” grading practices that inflated achievement by not permitting teachers to give zeroes for work not done.

Melinda Manning is a school board member in Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools, North Carolina. Her Facebook bio reads: “Nasty woman who likes civility, dismantling the patriarchy, yoga, real books, tea, and buying local.” She makes posts attacking President Trump, vows to protect illegal aliens from ICE, and proclaims that she will “aid and abet abortion.” Manning is one of seven governing members responsible for the policies and curriculum for over 11,000 students.

These are just a few of examples of dangerous leaders that fly under the radar because conservatives haven’t taken school board races seriously enough. That’s why we launched District Watch: To expose people like these state-by-state, beginning with Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Virginia—where Democrats have tried many of their worst policies.

We’re just getting started.

Check out District Watch today—and help us expand to your state next. Whether it’s chipping in to fund our investigative research or sending us a tip through our tipline, we need your help to restore America’s schools.

Access the article: <https://restoration-news.com/district-watch-exposing-the-radical-takeover-of-america-s-schools>

VOC Student Essay Contest

By VOC Staff originally published in Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (February 19 2026)

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC) will honor the legacy of the Declaration of Independence with an essay contest that will teach students about freedom movements that directly cited or paraphrased the Declaration of Independence. This will demonstrate to citizens and students the exceptional nature of the American “experiment” in self-government and ordered liberty.

Essay Prompt: Explain how the U.S. Declaration of Independence inspired a key liberty champion and/or freedom movement in a foreign context.



Scholar David Armitage suggested that nearly 200 countries and overseas political movements have cited the Declaration, from Haiti to Kosovo. For example, Mahatma Gandhi used the language of the Declaration in 1930. Czech anti-communist, dissident, playwright, and later president of free Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel asserted the transcendent nature of the Declaration: “The Declaration of Independence ... states that the Creator gave man the right to liberty. It seems man can realize that liberty only if he does not forget the One who endowed him with it.”

The Foundation will recognize up to 52 outstanding student essays that focus attention on how the Declaration of Independence influenced declarations, speeches, and other political writing in foreign contexts during the 20th century. We are especially interested in short essays that focus on those seeking freedom from communist and Marxist systems.

The contest was opened to grades 9-12 and college students from across the United States. The contest closed on May 1, 2026.

Explore the selected essays: <https://victimsofcommunism.org/essay-contest-archive/>

Here is an example of a selected essay.

Jefferson In Beijing

By Jonas Lane (March 9 2026)

In 1776, a group of American colonists declared that all men are created equal with inalienable rights and that governments are just only when they are by the consent of the governed. This declaration would be heard again in an unlikely place more than two hundred years later: communist China. In a similar fashion, Chinese students used the Declaration of Independence to complain about the CCP's authority during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. While living under an entirely different form of government, the protestors' demands for rights and liberty reflected the Declaration's ideas that all men are entitled to liberty and participation in the government.

The belief that rights are inalienable, grounded in natural law rather than any government, is also reflected in the Declaration of Independence. Upon asserting that "all men are created equal" and thus endowed with "unalienable Rights" such as life and liberty, the Declaration states that governments are instituted to secure the rights, and that when they become destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish them. The principle of popular sovereignty superseded forms of monarchy or government that were based solely on coercion and instead stressed a system which derives its legitimacy from the people.

Chinese communism is a Marxist-Leninist ideology that views the Communist Party as the embodiment of the will of the people and the basis of the popular will that cannot be rightfully disputed, whereas the rights of the individual yield to the rights of the collectivity and the state. Dissent is not a value. It is a threat. It means that Chinese citizens have no freedom of speech, no free elections and no possibility of organizing a meaningful fight against corruption or abuse of power.

By the late 1980s, many Chinese students exposed to Western publications and broadcasts began to question the system and demand more political rights. After the liberal-minded Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang died in April 1989, thousands of students came to Tiananmen Square to pay tribute to him and demand democratic reform, igniting a nationwide protest against the one-party system.

In terms of its goals, the Tiananmen protestors' demands were similar to those of the Americans at the time of drafting the Declaration of Independence: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, individual rights. One of the movement's key documents, the Tiananmen Manifesto, declared, "democracy, freedom, and human rights" as the movement's demand, alongside the denunciation of corruption and suppression of politics. Like other manifestos, the document reflects the belief that any legitimate government must be accountable to the people and respect their rights.

The protestors' symbolism also drew from American political culture. For instance, the most famous icon of the protests was the "Goddess of Democracy", a statue built by art students at Tiananmen Square, which was modeled after the Statue of Liberty in New York. To the protesting students, the statue represented freedom, the resistance against oppression, and aspirations for humanity. The protestors' use of the statue as a symbol equated their movement with Western ideas of freedom, such as those derived from the United States.

Furthermore, some student leaders explicitly quoted the lines by American politicians. For example, protest leader Wang Dan said that many students had read Jefferson, Lincoln, and other leaders, and explained that the protest was inspired by these leaders' beliefs that political power comes from the people, not the ruling party. This is paraphrased from the Declaration of Independence, which says that governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed." However, the students were not merely objecting to specific policies, but the entire communist system.

Rather than a single political struggle, the Tiananmen protests were part of a historic global civil disobedience and nonviolent revolution tradition based on liberal political philosophy, in which American colonists challenged British rule in the name of liberty and the Chinese students challenged communist rule in the name of democracy. Both believed that unjust governments lost their right to rule.

The Tiananmen Square protests are an example of this. The Chinese government sent tanks and troops into Beijing on June 4, 1989, in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to quell the protests. Thousands of people were killed, and this was erased from history by the government, which still censors discussion of these events. The violent response suggests that the CCP understood how dangerous these ideas were. Belief in natural rights runs counter to the principles of one-party rule.

While the protests in Tiananmen Square would ultimately fail, the legacy of the Declaration of Independence was that the ideals presented there did not apply to one place, but are rather universal expressions of freedom. Even in a society committed to the principles of communism, individuals have turned to the same principles of freedom and human dignity that were embraced in 1776.

As historian Dr. Lee Edwards has pointed out, the struggle against communism was always "a moral struggle, not just a geopolitical one." The students on Tiananmen Square were not just protesting an economic crisis or details of government policy. They were staking a moral claim about the nature of just government itself. They were reiterating a truth of the Declaration: that government exists to serve the people. Theirs was a universal message. The search for liberty knows no national borders or ideology. It is an instinct that transcends and outlasts oppressive regimes everywhere in the world.

Jonas Lane, a student at Schlarman Academy, authored this article as part of VOC's Student Essay Contest.

Access the essay: <https://victimsofcommunism.org/jefferson-in-beijing/>



The Victims of Communism Memorial. Photo courtesy of Publisher April 2026.

The Victims of Communism Memorial honors the more than 100 million people worldwide who lost their lives under communist regimes and those who continue to suffer under totalitarian systems today. Located at the intersection of New Jersey Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue NW, near Union Station (Washington DC), the memorial stands as a moral and historical statement about the human cost of political repression and the universal longing for freedom. Authorized by Congress in 1993 and dedicated in 2007, the memorial reflects a bipartisan commitment to remembrance, education, and the defense of fundamental human rights.

The memorial's design centers on a bronze replica of the "Goddess of Democracy," a statue originally created by Chinese student demonstrators during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

For more information: <https://www.nps.gov/places/000/victims-of-communism-memorial.htm>, <https://victimsofcommunism.org/about/memorial/>

Victims Of Communism Museum: A New Birth Of Freedom (New Exhibit)

The Victims of Communism Museum is proud to host our latest temporary gallery, **A New Birth of Freedom**, that explores America's past, present, and future. Curated by the **American Journey Experience**, the exhibit invites visitors to learn about the principles that shape a free society, in stark contrast to the oppressive ideology of communism.

This is not simply history on display; it is a story to wrestle with and reflect upon. Visitors will walk through the struggles of Jamestown, where a communal system led to starvation and despair, stand with the Pilgrims, whose faith carried them through a devastating first winter, and encounter the bold words of Thomas Jefferson.

This exhibition is both remembrance and invitation. As you move through it, we ask you to reflect on a profound idea: America is not merely a place on a map – it is a set of principles. And the endurance of that idea depends on those willing to understand it, preserve it, and defend it.

The exhibit is open Tuesday-Saturday, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and runs through August 21, 2026. Admission is free. We hope to see you there.

Watch video about the exhibit (2mins 37secs): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_82ukBKCR4&t=1s

Visit VOC Museum in Washington DC: <https://vocmuseum.org/about/>

Institute Announces Winners Of National Youth Civics Challenge

Sandra Day O'Connor Institute PRESS RELEASE May 7 2026

Civics video entries submitted from middle, high school students

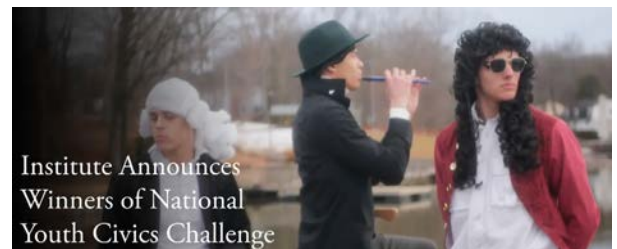
The Sandra Day O'Connor Institute is pleased to announce its ten national winners of the 7th Annual Civics Challenge. The online civics competition, open to students in grades 6 through 12, challenges them to choose a civics-related topic and then express their knowledge and creativity in a short video or original song to earn a \$500 cash prize.

This year's contest represents a rare and meaningful opportunity for young Americans to honor our nation as it celebrates the 250th anniversary of its founding this summer. The submissions reflect the remarkable depth of civic knowledge and creative talent among today's youth.

"We are inspired by these students' talent and commitment to civics, and as we mark 250 years, their passion reflects Justice O'Connor's legacy and the importance of encouraging youth to honor the values that define America," Institute President and CEO Sarah Suggs said. "We congratulate all of the winners for their commitment to civics."

Winning entries and additional information on the Civics Challenge and other Institute programs are available at oconnorinstitute.org/occvinners. The winners of the middle and high school categories are listed below. The Institute has created a highlight video to showcase the prize-winning students' talent.

You can find a complete playlist of the winning videos here: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLrxlQt85uxLEnZ36qpPmmoRwFwZbB4R-b>



High School Winners:

- Silas P./Cameron A./Noah B./Brian H., 11th Grade, Dumfries, Virginia – *George Washington Type Beat*
- Elizabeth R., 11th Grade, Winston Salem, North Carolina – *Opening Doors (Abigail Adams and the Evolution of the Women's Suffrage Movement)*
- Willow S., 10th Grade, Berlin Center, Ohio – *Sandra Day O'Connor*
- Isabella G., 9th Grade, Wallingford, Connecticut – *Evolutionary History Asks Something of Us: Consent*
- Ethan S., 10th Grade, Highland Heights, Ohio – *Civics Live: Your Rights & Responsibility*

Middle School Winners:

- Hazel S., 7th Grade, Merritt Island, Florida – *The Adventures of a Census Worker*
- Ranvir S., 7th Grade, Peoria, Arizona – *Celebrating America 250: With Benjamin Franklin's Reflections in His Own Words*
- Siddharta R., 7th Grade, Burbank, California – *What is Jury Duty?*
- Zuri C., 7th Grade, Miami, Florida – *She Sat So Others Could Stand*
- Everleigh M., 8th Grade, Rockford, Michigan – *Be Like Ben*

Access the Press Release: <https://oconnorinstitute.org/newsroom/2026-winners-of-civics-challenge/>

Election Integrity

The Coming Collapse Of Local Government In New Jersey: Retirements, Patronage, And The Talent Crisis

By Mark Demo

This multi-part series examines how New Jersey's county and municipal governments — the backbone of services like elections, roads, public safety, permitting, taxes, and emergency response — face a structural breakdown. An aging workforce is retiring en masse, often replaced by politically connected appointees rather than qualified professionals. Chronic underpayment compared to the private sector makes merit-based hiring nearly impossible. The result: financial and operational chaos, service failures, and ballooning costs that threaten the state's 565 municipalities and 21 counties.

Part 1: The Silver Tsunami Hits New Jersey — Mass Retirements Drain Institutional Knowledge

New Jersey's local governments have long relied on experienced career civil servants, many Baby Boomers who entered public service decades ago. State Civil Service Commission data shows a workforce with significant tenure: as of recent profiles, a large share of employees have 12+ years of service, and age distributions reveal substantial portions approaching or past typical retirement age (55–65+ with pensions).

Pensions in New Jersey, particularly PERS and PFRS, historically encouraged earlier exits with defined benefits. Post-pandemic, this trend has accelerated. Nationally and in NJ, local governments report retirement as a top driver of turnover, with many departments losing veteran staff in public works, finance, planning, and administration.

Consequences in NJ: Smaller municipalities and counties lose “tribal knowledge” of complex and ever-changing regulations, local history, and crisis response. Infrastructure maintenance, financial management, budgeting, and compliance suffer. Reports from NJ highlight aging water/sewer authority staff from the 1970s Clean Water Act era now retiring, straining systems already under pressure.

Without robust succession planning, vacancies pile up, forcing overtime, consultants, or reduced services — all funded by New Jersey's high property taxpayers.

Part 2: From Merit to Patronage — Political Appointments Flood Local Halls

As veterans retire, many mid and senior-level positions in counties and towns go unfilled or shift from competitive civil service processes to political appointments. New Jersey's strong county committee system and local political machines often prioritize loyalty over expertise when filling roles like department heads, administrators, or key advisors. Grassroots election integrity investigators for Citizens for NJ Election Integrity have observed firsthand in dealing with Board of Elections appointees who have no idea what their job responsibilities are regarding Title 19 (NJ State election law).

While staff political alignment with elected leaders may have some value, drawbacks are many including:

- Rapid turnover with each election cycle.
- Inexperienced staff managing multi-million-dollar operations.

- Erosion of morale among career employees.
- Higher risk of fraud and/or errors in financial management, compliance, permitting, procurement, and public safety coordination.

Chaos on the Ground: Delays in audited financial statements, development approvals, flawed budgets, and fragmented emergency planning. Younger appointees may bring energy but lack the depth for NJ's complex regulatory environment, high-stakes infrastructure, and dense population pressures.

Part 3: The Pay Gap Trap — Why NJ Governments Can't Compete for Talent

Even when leaders want merit-based hires, basic economics can block them. New Jersey public sector salaries lag private-sector equivalents, especially for skilled roles in IT, engineering, finance, legal, and management. Analyses show state/local workers often under-compensated by 15%+ after adjustments for education and experience, with total compensation gaps widening in recent years for college-educated roles.

NJ Context:

- High cost of living (especially housing and taxes) makes government pay uncompetitive.
- Slow hiring processes (months vs. weeks in private sector).
- Private sector offers bonuses, faster promotions, and flexibility.

Result: Shallow applicant pools. Governments settle for less experienced candidates or leave positions vacant. Younger workers (Millennials/Gen Z) cycle through quickly for better opportunities elsewhere. NJ reports echo national trends of shrinking public workforces and recruitment struggles.

This perpetuates the cycle: underpayment – understaffing – burnout – more exits.

Part 4: The Human and Fiscal Costs — Service Breakdown and Taxpayer Burden

The interplay of retirements, patronage, and pay gaps produces cascading failures:

- **Higher Costs:** Financial mismanagement, higher turnover expenses (30–200% of salary per employee), consultants, overtime, and legal risks from errors.
- **Service Delays:** Backlogs in building permits, road repairs, tax assessments, and social services.
- **Public Safety and Infrastructure Risks:** Understaffed planning, public works, and health departments struggle with NJ's aging infrastructure and dense population.
- **Eroding Trust:** Residents face higher property taxes for diminished services, fueling dissatisfaction in a state already burdened by high costs.

Broader State Impact: Counties and towns handle much of NJ's day-to-day governance. Failures ripple upward, pressuring state aid, budgets, and mandates.

Fiscal watchdogs note ongoing pressures on local budgets, with pension obligations and staffing shortages compounding long-term liabilities.

Part 5: Implications for New Jersey — Toward Systemic Collapse?

Unchecked, this workforce crisis risks functional collapse in smaller or fiscally strained municipalities: bankruptcies (or state takeovers), widespread service cuts, and migration of residents/businesses away from poorly governed areas. Larger counties may muddle through but at escalating taxpayer cost. NJ's overall competitiveness suffers as government inefficiency deters investment.

New Jersey must act decisively. Without adjustments, local government — the most direct interface citizens have with the state — will continue degrading, undermining the Garden State's livability and economic future.

About Citizens for NJ Election Integrity

Citizens for NJ Election Integrity is a non-partisan organization dedicated to ensuring fair and transparent elections in New Jersey. The group advocates for electoral reforms, improved voter verification processes, and public education on election integrity. For more information, please visit <http://www.citizens4njei.org/>.

Media Contact: Mark Flaherty, Communications Director, Citizens for NJ Election Integrity
914-473-2038 • Mark.Flaherty@citizens4njei.org

For further inquiries or to schedule an interview, please contact C4NJEI at the information provided above.

America: The Real Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

OPINION by Victor Davis Hanson originally published in The Blade of Perseus (May 19 2026)

One American view of China—now increasingly popular on the Left and the Right alike, especially among the hate-Trump crowd—is that the communist colossus will be forever ascendant, with continued astonishing levels of food production, ship construction, and industrial output. In this pessimistic view, China will soon replace America as the world's predominant power. We are, supposedly, like an exhausted British Empire circa 1945, and China is the new version of the postwar American powerhouse.

Yet even Beijing's miraculous 30-year leap out of poverty into first-world affluence and Westernized power is hardly the same as parity with the US. In truth, Trump held almost all the cards at the current summit and will do so again when Xi Jinping visits the US this autumn. According to nearly every historical measure of power, the US leads China by sizable margins—in wealth, economic output, fuel, food, and military strength.

China has roughly four times the population of the US, but produces only about 60 percent of our total GDP. A crude way of looking at this asymmetry is that one US citizen accounts for 40 percent more goods and services than his four Chinese counterparts. Americans enjoy a per capita GDP (roughly \$95,000) over six times higher than China's (roughly \$15,000).

We are the largest oil and gas producer and exporter in history; China must import 11 to 12 million barrels of oil every day. The US is also the greatest food exporter in history; China, for all its miraculous increases in agricultural productivity, still must import 30–40 percent of its food, a number that keeps rising as China becomes more affluent and more diverse in its food consumption.

The US still spends almost three times as much on defense. Its nuclear forces are roughly six times larger, and its 11 carrier strike groups are nearly four times more numerous than China's three conventionally powered carriers. The US has more than 100 years of experience in carrier warfare; China has less than 15 years.

American universities' science, technology, engineering, and mathematics departments dominate global rankings. In terms of market capitalization, eight US companies are in the world's top ten. American companies, along with NASA, have regained prior American primacy in space exploration. In new frontiers such as robotics, drones, artificial intelligence, nuclear fusion, cryptocurrencies, and bioengineering, a once sluggish US has woken up, rebounded, and is reasserting its preeminence.

True, the US fertility rate is down to 1.7. But China's is 1.0, and its population is rapidly shrinking and aging.

But most importantly, China is an autocracy. It is superficially efficient, but its technology is ultimately derived from the free and wide-open atmosphere of the West and of the US in particular. There are usually around 300,000 Chinese students here in the US—and they are not art history majors, but sent here to master and appropriate US scientific expertise and then return home to clone it.

China has spent over \$4 trillion in the last decade on its Belt and Road, mercantile, and imperialist agendas and on its military-industrial complex. Yet recently, its effort to pull Latin America away from the US has been failing miserably. China lost its client, Nicolás Maduro, in Venezuela, and, with his arrest, Venezuela's discounted oil imports. Its insidious effort to control the Panama Canal was aborted by Trump.

For now, China has also lost its discounted oil from Iran. If, in the months ahead, the Iranian theocracy falls, China will have no presence in the oil-rich Middle East, even as its appetite for oil grows exponentially. In terms of China's stranglehold on rare-earth minerals, a once sleepy US is planning its own huge new mines in mad dash fashion everywhere from Greenland to California, Utah, and Wyoming.

The latest Chinese air defenses have failed miserably in Iran in 2025–26. But US naval and air power—both weapons and personnel—performed brilliantly against Iran.

Geostrategically, the US enjoys two vast oceans off its coast and, despite tensions, considers Canada and Mexico allies. Both are dependent on the US economy and ultimately the American military for their defense. And North America may be the most natural-resource-rich continent in the world. China, by contrast, shares a border with nuclear-armed arch-rival India and an always unpredictable nuclear Russia—not to mention volatile, nuclear North Korea. Besides these, China, which suppresses 12 million Uyghur Muslims, has five Muslim neighbors. The US and its European NATO partners often bicker, but again, China's North Korean “ally” is a nuclear global pariah.

Critics claim the Iran war plays into China's hands, but they rarely convincingly explain how or why Beijing is stronger than before the war started. Its trading partner and oil supplier, Iran, is in shambles and now fires on Chinese tankers seeking oil in the Gulf. Israel and the US allies in the Gulf are ascendant, and in the years to come, they will remember that China was an enabler of their shared archenemy Iran.

If there is peace soon in Ukraine, Russia will likely seek to triangulate with the US against China and vice versa, as in the old days of Henry Kissinger's great-game balancing act ("China will be no friendlier to Russia than to the US, and Russia no friendlier to China than to the US").

China is about as popular in the Pacific as was the hated Japanese Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of World War II. It takes some effort to alienate formerly anti-American nations like Vietnam and the Philippines and drive them into the US sphere of influence. In truth, China has legitimate worries about its neighborhood, since it is surrounded by its own "ring of fire," nations that are far more potent and dangerous than the motley crew of Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis that Iran once used to encircle Israel. Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam are all rearming, seeking closer military relations with the US, and forming a loose alliance against what they see as their common existential enemy China.

As far as leverage goes, tomorrow the US could deny visas and green cards to hundreds of thousands of Chinese students and technicians, effectively aborting China's fifty-year effort to absorb and replicate US technology.

Tomorrow, Trump could announce that he seeks "parity" and "equity" with China in a spirit of "friendship" as he announces that the number of Chinese nationals in the US from now on will match the number of their US counterparts residing in China. China can buy as much US farmland as Americans can buy Chinese farmland. Chinese can buy property as close to US bases as Americans can purchase land near Chinese bases.

Finally, the Ukraine and Iran wars have taught the world that cheap drones can sometimes nullify missile defenses and are nearly as effective as \$100 million combat aircraft and \$4 million missiles. The US is now rapidly incorporating the data from these two wars and will soon deploy a vast fleet of its own air, surface, and submarine drones.

The idea of a third of a million Chinese troops steaming across the 110-mile Taiwan Strait to land on the beaches of Taiwan, while fighting, in transit, and on arrival, thousands of drones, is not an appealing invasion scenario.

True, America can be sluggish, insular, complacent, and naïve.

But historically, its innately resilient free people, singular constitutional government, robust federalism, and free-market economy eventually wake up to the next rising threat—if often just in the nick of time. In the 1930s, a disarmed America, mired in depression, was told that fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and militarist Japan were the paradigms of the future, armed to the teeth, fielding millions of goose-stepping, scary soldiers, and engaging in massive rearmament.

When war broke out in 1939, the US Army ranked 19th in size worldwide. Was it hopeless? No. By war's end in August 1945, Nazism, fascism, and Japanese militarism were in ruins, and the US fleet and economy were larger than those of all the war's belligerents combined.

A communist Russia on the move, we were told, starting in the late 1940s, would destroy the US. And indeed, the Red Army loomed huge, and thousands of Russian nuclear missiles were eventually pointed at the US.

The Soviet Union, we were further warned, was taking over the globe, as an unstoppable communism seemed to spread unchecked through Latin America, Africa, and Asia to our doorstep in Cuba. But after the crackup of the Soviet Empire, Russia's GDP today is pathetically one-thirteenth the size of the US economy, and it has become a shrinking, aging, and unhealthy society.

Next, Japan, Inc. was also supposed to bury us in the 1980s, as confident, rich Japanese investors bought up the iconic Pebble Beach Golf Course, Rockefeller Center, and Columbia Pictures. We were told Honda and Toyota were light-years ahead of the soon-to-go-bankrupt Ford and GM. Today, Japan remains mired in deflation, and US corporations dwarf their Japanese counterparts.

Then, at the beginning of the millennium, it was the European Union's turn to be the next supposed wave of the future, with America once more relegated to the past. When the US in 2008 was mired in the Iraq War, short of oil, and faced with soaring gas prices, the dollar fell, and the euro rose to \$1.60. Soon, President Barack Obama would lecture Americans that we were no more an exceptional nation than Greece or the United Kingdom. "Lead from behind" became his new declinist mantra, and "apology tours" the way of the future.

Yet now the energy-short Europeans import American natural gas, and in early 2025, the euro fell to about \$1 before rising later in the year. Moreover, the Iran war revealed the European Union as militarily weak and energy-short, with vast numbers of unassimilated and often hostile illegal aliens, suicidal green policies, and a shrinking and aging population—and as reliant upon the US economy and military for its continued prosperity and security.

The latest supposed Chinese existential threat is not to be assessed by how fast and impressively the nation rose from its own prior weakness, poverty, and irrelevance. What matters instead is to what degree its innate system ensures that such ascendance will be permanently continued and whether its political system, food and fuel capacity, military, and scientific community are on par with those of America's.

And so far, in these regards, China, like all the other rivals of the last hundred years, has not come close.

Access the article: <https://victorhanson.com/america-the-real-crouching-tiger-hidden-dragon/>

How Religious Liberty Sustained America

On the Founders' First Freedom

By Ayaan Hirsi Ali originally published in National Review Magazine - March 2026 Issue (January 22 2026)

As the United States approaches its 250th birthday, a familiar claim is repeated with growing confidence: Religion is fading from American life. Faith, we are told, has retreated into the private realm. Public Christianity is an anachronism. Modern America, like modern Europe, is supposedly learning to live without God.

The statistics appear persuasive at first glance. Church attendance has declined. Denominational loyalty has weakened. Many Americans now describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious” or as simply unaffiliated. From this, commentators conclude that Christianity no longer shapes the nation’s moral or political imagination. This conclusion is mistaken.



Trinity Church, New York City (Roberto Machado Noa/Getty Images)

What has declined is not belief itself, but institutional trust. What has weakened is not Christianity’s influence, but the willingness of many churches to speak with theological integrity. Remove the fashionable assumptions, and a clearer reality emerges. Christianity didn’t merely accompany the American experiment. It formed it. It constrained power in ways no other civilizational inheritance had managed before. And it continues, even now, to shape American arguments about liberty, justice, and authority — sometimes faithfully, sometimes perversely, but never insignificantly.

From the beginning, the United States presented itself as something unprecedented yet deeply rooted. In recent years, it has become common to claim that America was never truly Christian, that its founding was purely secular, or even rooted in hostility to faith. That claim collapses under scrutiny. The Declaration of Independence was drafted by men who were overwhelmingly Christian — some orthodox, others deists, all formed by the moral language of the Bible. They argued fiercely over theology and shared no single creed. What bound them together was not doctrine, but formation: a common moral grammar shaped by Christianity, whether confessed, inherited, or assumed.

The Declaration appeals to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God” rather than to kings, bloodlines, or ancestral destiny. It speaks of truths that are self-evident because they are not invented by governments. Human beings, it insists, are endowed with rights. Those rights are not granted by the state. They preexist it. Governments exist to secure them, not redefine them.

This distinction is decisive. It is also unmistakably biblical. What mattered to the Founders was inheritance, not theological uniformity. Even those who identified as deists didn’t reject Christianity’s underlying framework. If anything, they assumed it. They rejected ecclesiastical coercion, not biblical anthropology. Their God was still a lawgiver. Their universe was still ordered. Human beings were still morally accountable creatures, not raw material for political experimentation. This is why the Declaration speaks of duties as naturally as it speaks of rights. Liberty, in this framework, is inseparable from responsibility. Free people must govern themselves, or freedom gives way to license and ends in rule by force.

Holding elections is not what makes America exceptional. Democracies are common, and many have proven fragile. The American republic is different because it treats liberty as prior to politics. Liberty is not dispensed by government; it precedes it. The purpose of the republic is to preserve a condition already assumed, not to manufacture freedom. That purpose didn’t come from ancient Greece or imperial Rome. It didn’t come from China, Japan, or India. It came from a religious tradition that insisted that power itself is limited.

In the Old Testament, political authority is never absolute. Kings rule, but they do not reign as gods. They are anointed, yet accountable. When the prophet Samuel warns Israel about monarchy, he describes, in almost clinical detail, the harms caused by unchecked power, what it costs a people: It takes sons and daughters, fields and flocks, labor and life. The warning is theological as much as political. All power belongs to God. When men claim it for themselves, oppression follows. This principle runs through the Hebrew Scripture with unsettling consistency. Pharaohs are humbled. Nebuchadnezzar is brought low. Even King David, chosen and beloved, is condemned when he abuses his authority. No ruler, however exalted, stands above judgment. No state may absorb the soul.

From this vision emerges a concept that modern thinkers later called negative liberty: freedom from domination, from arbitrary rule, from coercion. Liberty is defined as protection against being mastered by another rather than the ability to satisfy every desire. It is restraint, not indulgence. America chose this understanding deliberately.

This biblical suspicion of concentrated power explains something that modern readers often miss: why liberty in the American tradition is defensive rather than expansive. It exists to prevent injustice, not to guarantee happiness. The Founders imagined the state as a necessary restraint on fallibility rather than a vehicle for human perfection. This assumption mirrors the Old Testament view of human nature, which is neither naïvely optimistic nor nihilistic. Man is capable of good but prone to corruption. Power magnifies that tendency. Therefore, power must be divided, slowed, and constrained.

The New Testament deepened rather than displaced this inheritance. Christ does not arrive as a political revolutionary, yet His teaching quietly undermines every claim to absolute authority. "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's," He says, "and unto God what is God's." With that sentence, political power is relativized. Caesar is not divine. The state has limits. Conscience belongs elsewhere.

This separation between political authority and ultimate allegiance did not exist in most civilizations. In imperial Rome, the emperor was divine. In ancient Greece, the polis subsumed the individual. In much of Asia, cosmic order and political authority were fused. Japan, well into the 20th century, treated its emperor as a god incarnate. When the United States confronted Japan in World War II, American officials struggled to comprehend a system in which surrender was inconceivable because defeat would deny the divinity of Emperor Hirohito.

The Founding Fathers did not have Hirohito in mind when they debated religious liberty. Nor were they inspired by Mohammed. Their arguments unfolded within a Christian civilizational context. They weren't weighing Christianity against Islam or Buddhism. They were negotiating among Presbyterians, Anglicans, Baptists, and Methodists. The disputes were intra-Christian. That context matters, especially now.

The idea that rulers themselves are bound by law found early political expression in England. The Magna Carta didn't create liberty out of thin air. When rebellious barons forced King John to accept limits on his authority, they were invoking an older moral claim: that kings are subject to judgment. Property could not be seized arbitrarily. Justice couldn't be denied at will. The rule of law, as a concept, emerged from a Christian insistence that power must answer to something higher than itself. These developments unfolded unevenly across Europe, but they found their fullest institutional expression in England. Over time, courts asserted independence. Parliaments constrained monarchs. Still, Europe paid dearly for religious conflict. Sectarian violence and political repression scarred the continent for generations.

Many early Americans were the heirs of that exhaustion. They fled enforced uniformity. They crossed an ocean not to abandon Christianity, but to practice it freely. When they built their new society, they refused to nationalize faith while also refusing to banish it. The Constitution reflects this balance. It is remarkable not because it imagines human beings as virtuous, but because it assumes the opposite. Power is divided. Authority is checked. Liberty is preserved by restraining rulers, not trusting them.

This is why the Constitution reads less like a manifesto and more like a restraint system. It doesn't proclaim human goodness, but it does anticipate human abuse. The separation of powers, federalism, and judicial review aren't merely clever mechanisms; they're moral judgments embedded in law. They assume that no individual, faction, or institution should be trusted with unchecked authority. This skepticism is biblical. It reflects an anthropology shaped by Scripture rather than utopian theory.

The constitutional amendments that followed sharpened this commitment. Due process. Innocent until proven guilty. Protection against unreasonable searches. Freedom of conscience. Freedom of speech. These are not abstractions. Quite the opposite. They are defenses against tyranny. They rest on the assumption that the state is not the final arbiter. The First Amendment, in particular, is often misunderstood. It doesn't exile religion from public life. Instead, it prevents the state from coercing belief. Faith, in the Christian understanding, must be freely chosen or it is meaningless. Conscience cannot be commanded without being destroyed.

When Americans later confronted slavery, it was not secular ideology that supplied the most powerful moral critique. It was Christianity. Abolitionists didn't argue merely from efficiency or progress. They argued from Scripture. They insisted that every human being bore the image of God and that bondage was an offense against both man and the Creator. The same pattern appeared in struggles against segregation and in movements for women's legal equality. Christian language, Christian reasoning, and Christian imagery animated these efforts. They were imperfect. They were often resisted by other Christians. But the vocabulary came from the same source. Christianity has always constrained power by reminding the powerful that they are not gods. That constraint still matters, even when it is imperfectly applied.

The Christian voting bloc played a decisive role in the election of Donald Trump in both 2016 and 2024, not because he embodied Christian virtue, but because many believers saw him as a barrier against an aggressively secular political culture. When he survived an assassination attempt, a significant portion of the Christian public interpreted it as providential. Such interpretations discomfit secular observers, but they reveal how deeply biblical categories still shape American instinct.

Christian influence is also visible among the young. On college campuses once dominated by credentialed cynicism, students now cite Old and New Testament passages at public events. Before his assassination, Charlie Kirk spoke unapologetically about faith, framing Christianity not as rebellion or nostalgia, but as a source of order, discipline, and meaning. Charlie is gone, and his loss is profound. The mission, however, continues. His wife, Erika, has carried it forward with quiet authority and a courage that deserves recognition.

Even ideological disputes on the American right increasingly turn on biblical interpretation. Arguments over immigration, foreign policy, and national obligation often ask not only what is strategic, but what Scripture permits. Should the United States maintain unconditional alliances? What does the Bible say? Can a nation erase its borders in the name of compassion? Again, Scripture is invoked. The debate over whether Jesus was a refugee — and the insistence that, if He was, it would

obligate Christians to oppose border enforcement — reveals how easily theology is repurposed for contemporary policy arguments.

What's striking is that even movements hostile to Christianity cannot escape it. American progressivism doesn't resemble the militantly atheist communism of China or Cambodia. It is saturated with Christian language, however distorted. Christ is recast as a socialist. Scripture is reread through racial, sexual, or ideological lenses. Every cause demands a gospel. The distortion is obvious, but it reveals something important. Even those who wish to dismantle America's foundations feel compelled to appeal to Christian authority. The Bible still exerts gravitational pull.

That pull cannot sustain endless corruption. When churches become activist hubs and sermons become political lectures, believers disengage. Eighty percent of Americans still profess belief in God, yet less than a third attend church regularly. However, as noted earlier, Christianity has not lost its relevance. Many churches, though, have abandoned theological fidelity, and that has driven worshippers away. Congregations want formation, not activism masquerading as faith. Catholic youth, in particular, are returning to traditional liturgy, drawn by reverence, discipline, and continuity.

There is a widening gap between church leadership, often politically progressive, and congregations that are markedly more conservative. The assumption that American churches are uniformly right-wing falls apart on contact with reality. If anything, the imbalance has long tilted the other way. Much of the institutional church leadership has spent decades absorbing the language of progressive politics, often more fluently than the language of theology. The Founding Fathers, were they to wake today, would be appalled by this confusion. They would recognize in it the same temptation they sought to restrain: the urge to fuse righteousness with power. Yet they would also be heartened. They would see Americans who refuse to surrender judgment, who insist that liberty is not self-justifying.

America has experienced repeated religious revivals. They were disruptive events. They unsettled complacency, challenged authority, and reordered public life. There is no reason to assume that such renewal is confined to the past.

At 250 years, the American experiment remains unfinished. Its endurance has always rested on a vital insight: Liberty does not sustain itself. It requires limits that power alone cannot supply. Christianity provided those limits, and it can do so again. As an American citizen, I am deeply grateful for that inheritance. Whether America chooses to recover it will shape not only what kind of nation it becomes, but the kind of republic it remains.

Access the article: https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2026/03/how-religious-liberty-sustained-america/?utm_source=recirc-desktop&utm_medium=homepage&utm_campaign=top-of-nav&utm_content=hero-module

Public Corner

Public Local Meetings

Interested in attending public meetings? Here are a few in your area for this month.

<https://www.mercercounty.org/i-want-to/calendar-meeting-list>

HVRSD School Board Meeting

Monday June 15, 2026 at 6:30 PM (Regular and Business Organization)

425 S Main St. Pennington, NJ 08534 or Livestream on YouTube

Municipal Township Meetings

<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/calendar.aspx?CID=32>

Township Committee Regular Meetings

Monday June 8, 2026, 6:30 PM

Monday June 22 2026, 6:30 PM

Meetings are in hybrid format- Township Municipal Building & Zoom. Township meetings will be held at HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING 201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08560

In case you are unable to attend Township Committee mtgs, the recordings are available. Per the township clerk's office Kathy, they are "usually," available within a few days of the meeting.

Happy viewing click here: https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/k83q0qZsxB_6dlk4EjvYfv...

or: <https://www.hopewelltpw.org/> select How Do I.../ bottom right View/ Video Library

Board of Elections Meeting

Schedule, Agenda, Minutes: <https://www.mercercounty.org/boards-commissions/board-of-elections/board-meeting-schedule-election-timelines>

Tuesday June 9, 2026 at 12:00 PM

Board of Elections Meetings will be at 930 Spruce St., Lawrence, NJ 08648

Mercer County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Notice, Agenda: <https://www.mercercounty.org/government/board-of-county-commissioners/meeting-agenda>

Meeting Schedule -- June 2026

Tuesday June 9, 2026 6:00 PM Agenda Meeting

Thursday June 11, 2026 6:00 PM Formal Meeting

Tuesday June 23, 2026 6:00 PM Agenda Meeting

Thursday June 25, 2026 6:00 PM Formal Meeting

Agenda and Formal Meetings will take place at the Mercer County Administration Building, Room 211, 640 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ unless otherwise stated.

In order to encourage full participation of these meetings, please submit any requests for accommodations of people with disabilities to the Clerk to the Board, Mercer County Administration Building, PO Box 8068, Trenton, New Jersey, 08650

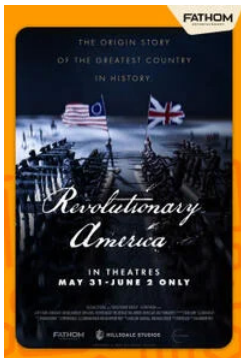
(609) 989-6583 {V/TTY} {Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 101-336}

TruthBTold



At the Movies, Bookstores

Hillsdale College's First Feature-Length Documentary 'Revolutionary America' Coming To Theatres From Fathom Entertainment May 31 – June 2



Revolutionary America

Genre: Documentary, Drama
Release Date: May 31 2026
Produced by: Hillsdale Studios
Duration: 1h 53mins
Narrated by: Tom Selleck

A historical documentary tells the story of America's founding and those who risked their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor" fighting for liberty

Watch Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jeBinuMUhE

Tickets on Sale Now: <https://hubs.ly/Q049Vp350>, Fandango

Press Release April 17 2026 (Hillsdale College & Fathom Entertainment)

HILLSDALE, Mich. and DENVER, Colo. — April 17, 2026 — "Revolutionary America," produced by Hillsdale Studios and distributed by Fathom Entertainment, the leading specialty distributor of content to theatrical partners worldwide, is Hillsdale College's first feature-length documentary. Narrated by Tom Selleck, the film explores the Revolution through the experience of Americans between 1763-1791, bringing into focus the political principles that animated their fight for independence and self-government, as the Founding Fathers risked their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor" in a fight for liberty that would shape a lasting republic. "Revolutionary America" will be shown in theatres from May 31-June 2, 2026.

"As we approach the 250th anniversary of American Independence, 'Revolutionary America' will help Americans to understand the purpose of the Revolution and the nature of the conflict," said Jeremiah Regan, executive producer of Revolutionary America and executive director of Online Learning at Hillsdale College. "Our Founding, which was possible due to the wisdom, faith, and courage of our forefathers, is the most remarkable political achievement in history."

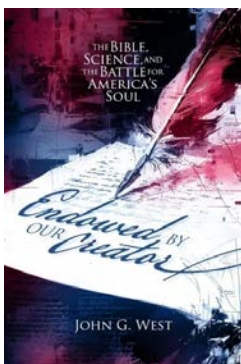
The documentary features insights from Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn; Hillsdale faculty members John Grant, Wilfred McClay, Paul Moreno, Kevin Slack, and Thomas West; and select public thought leaders, including Michael J. Knowles, John Lovell and Eric Metaxas, along with primary source accounts, a compelling original score, evocative artwork, and dynamic visual effects. "Revolutionary America" will help audiences see the Revolution through the eyes of the Americans who lived it.

"American history is remarkable and deserves careful study, which repays the student with appreciation and enjoyment," Regan said. "We made this film with great care so that it is both accurate and entertaining, with the goal of providing a delightful, inspiring, and educational experience to the audience."

Tickets for Revolutionary America are available now online and at participating theatre box offices (theatre locations are subject to change). For more information, please visit Fathom Entertainment.

Access the full Press Release: <https://www.hillsdale.edu/news-and-media/press-releases/hillsdale-colleges-first-feature-length-documentary-revolutionary-america-coming-to-theatres-from-fathom-entertainment-may-31-june-2/>

Book: Endowed By Our Creator: The Bible, Science, And The Battle For America's Soul



Author: John West
Publisher: Discovery Institute
Publication Date: February 27 2026
Paperback, 212 Pages

The Declaration of Independence proclaims that "all men are created equal" and "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." For generations, those hallowed words inspired not only Americans, but millions around the globe. Yet today many Americans are skeptical or confused about the Declaration's key claims. In this timely book, political scientist John G. West explores the original meaning of the Declaration and shows how its propositions drew support from both the Bible and early modern science. He then documents how science was later misused to overturn the Declaration's teaching on equality, subvert its understanding of liberty, and justify the creation of a technocratic state that regulates us from cradle to grave. Finally, he reveals new scientific discoveries that are pointing us back to the truths expressed in the Declaration — and he explains why it is urgent that our culture recover them.

To purchase: Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Bookshop
Discovery Institute website: <https://www.discovery.org/b/endowed-by-our-creator/>

Praise

"John West... reminds us that the Founding Fathers meant that our rights come from... God and not secular authority. Our current crisis of culture and spirit will only be healed by the return to those Creator-endowed rights." **Newt Gingrich**, Speaker, US House of Representatives (1995-1999)

"Masterfully peels back the layers of debris to reveal the truth and beauty of America's founding document.... An essential primer on the greatest political document in human history." **Joel Berry**, Managing Editor, *The Babylon Bee*

"What could be more important on our celebration of 250 years as a nation than to understand the basis of our divinely blessed founding? This book gets us back to bedrock." **Sam Brownback**, former United States Senator and Governor of Kansas, and former US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom

"An important and wide-ranging book, examining America's founding ideals and the gradual but consistent assault on them through the years.... It couldn't be timelier." **David Limbaugh**, New York Times bestselling author of *Crimes Against Liberty*

"This masterful work begins with the Declaration of Independence and traces the fundamental truths therein through the complete development of modern scientific culture, along the way settling Darwin in his proper niche and reviving the 'consent of the governed' as the bedrock of good government." **William B. Allen**, Emeritus Dean and Professor of Political Philosophy, Michigan State University; former Chairman, United States Commission on Civil Rights

"John West grasps and wields the redemptive key to prosperity: human creativity in the image of the Creator." **George Gilder**, author of *Wealth and Poverty*

"As John G. West eloquently explains, America is founded on a set of ideas, ideas articulated in the Declaration of Independence... [H]e calls upon his fellow citizens to recommit ourselves to the Declaration's principles." **Mark David Hall**, Professor, Regent University; author of *Did America Have a Christian Founding?*

"*Endowed by Our Creator* is required reading for every adult citizen and resident of America. It is required reading for every student in our public, private, and home schools as well as colleges and universities. Dr. John West has done the Herculean task of elucidating the meaning and eternal importance of the foundational creed of the United States of America-the Declaration of Independence." **Gerson Moreno-Riaño**, President, Cornerstone University

"John West masterfully exposes how science, philosophy, theology, and political theory have been misused to portray the Declaration of Independence as antiquated and misleading. He demonstrates instead that these disciplines, rightly understood, strongly reinforce the Declaration's original meaning and enduring intent." **William A. Dembski**, author of *The Design Inference*

"John West supplies a succinct analysis of the fundamental principles of the Declaration of Independence. He also shows how contemporary science may supplement and even fulfill those principles against clashing claims from social and natural scientists." **Ken Masugi**, Johns Hopkins University (2009-2025); co-editor of *The American Founding: Essays on the Formation of the Constitution*

"John West is right to direct our attention to the way in which our rights, duties, and free government itself were 'endowed by our Creator,' and must draw their understanding from 'the laws of Nature and of Nature's God.'" **Steven F. Hayward**, Visiting Professor, Pepperdine University School of Public Policy; author of the two-volume *The Age of Reagan*

War On The Founding: New Book By John West Describes The "Battle for America's Soul"

By David Klinghoffer originally published in *Science & Culture Today* (March 2 2026)

America is at war in the Middle East. Yet here at home, a conflict is ongoing that stands to be far more consequential because it strikes at the root ideas that underlie our own country.

It is a war on the American Founding, powerfully described by political scientist John West in his new book *Endowed by Our Creator: The Bible, Science, and the Battle for America's Soul*, out on March 3, looking ahead to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

This conflict is waged not with missiles and drones but with spiritual, philosophical, and yes, scientific untruths pitted against corresponding truths. The book's title, of course, is taken from the key phrases of the Declaration that initiated the American Revolution, stating "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."



Image: The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton, December 26, 1776, by John Trumbull, via Wikimedia Commons.

Easy to Say “Of Course”

I may say “of course” that’s where the title is drawn from, but as new polling data reveal, many Americans are in need of education about the Founding, especially about the source of our rights in a Creator, and the necessary limits on the scope of government.

With elections upcoming later this year, more than focusing just on victory in seeking office, our leaders need to assume the role of educators. As Dr. West emphasizes, nothing less than “America’s soul” is at stake.

The Politics of Blasphemy

The Founders believed that reason and revelation lead to the same set of principles — “converged” on them, as John West puts it. Revelation did not ask us to deny reason or science, but to affirm them. Yet he traces a second Revolution, against the Revolution of 1776, that has falsely attacked those principles in the name of reason and science.

A high-ranking Confederate politician, for example, sought to do nothing less than “blasphemously appropriate[e] words from the New Testament where Jesus was identified as the cornerstone,” replacing “Jesus with the doctrine of scientific racism.” While some of the relevant issues have changed, the politics of blasphemy, and abusing science in its name, are still very much with us.

However, while contemporary American figures, not least on the political Right, may deny it — pining for the days of feudalism, monarchy, or theocracy — science itself has returned to the aid of the Founding project:

[S]cience in our day has come around to reaffirming three truths articulated by the natural theologians and by America’s Founders: There is a Creator. All men are created equal. And because of human equality, governments should be based on consent of the governed.

The American Creed

West quotes Chesterton:

“America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed,” observed English writer G. K. Chesterton after visiting the United States in 1921. “That creed is set forth with dogmatic and even theological lucidity in the Declaration of Independence; perhaps the only piece of practical politics that is also theoretical politics and also great literature.”

According to West, “Many Americans are apt to miss the full significance” of this statement. That is true, and at the present moment, defending the Declaration as our creed puts you on a collision course with some very influential people.

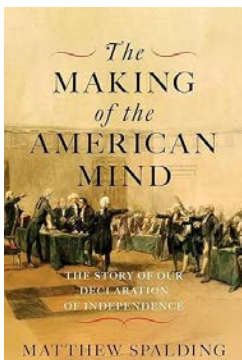
Indeed, I would add on a personal note, I have been troubled by calls from high levels in our political culture to replace the true creed of the United States, the Declaration, with another, which would render a swath of Americans, including me, as second-class citizens.

I am grateful to our colleague John West for his strong defense of America’s founding ideas not just as fondly held sentiments but as hard truths grounded in reality. This is a wonderful book, not least its section at the end of “Resources for Digging Deeper.” When I first heard about *Endowed by Our Creator*, I hoped that it would include such a resource. It also includes fascinating historical images. See here for some amazing endorsements.

New survey data from John West and Discovery Institute underscore the urgency of the book, reporting *How Americans View the American Founding*. For a 75-page document on that, please go here for the free download now. More on all this is to come in future weeks.

Access the article: <https://scienceandculture.com/2026/03/war-on-the-founding-new-book-by-john-west-describes-the-battle-for-americas-soul/>

Book: The Making Of The American Mind: The Story Of Our Declaration Of Independence



Author: Matthew Spalding
Publisher: Encounter Books
Publication Date: December 9 2025
Hardcover, 344 Pages

Overview

Thomas Jefferson called the Declaration of Independence “an expression of the American mind.” Not merely a document, the Declaration is the common creed of our civic life, and it inspires the shared poetry of our political soul.

In *The Making of the American Mind*, best-selling author Matthew Spalding presents the dynamic story of the band of patriots who united to declare independence from—and declare war against—the most powerful nation in the world. He recounts the whirlwind of historic events that led up to

the momentous political and strategic decisions of July 1776: from George Washington leading a new and untested army, to John Adams and Thomas Jefferson advocating independence in a divided Continental Congress, to George III forging an absolute tyranny over “the good People of these Colonies.”

In this unique commentary, Spalding recovers the deep roots of the Declaration of Independence by examining the influence of the Greeks and Romans, the Christian West, and the English constitutional tradition on the American mind. Reading through the Declaration clause by clause, he explores the rich history and profound significance of the document’s powerful language and arguments—from the “Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,” “all men are created equal,” and the “pursuit of happiness” to “prudence will dictate” and “abuses and usurpations.” Based on extensive, original research, the work presents in vivid detail the heroic deeds of those who pledged “our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor” to support the Declaration.

America cannot be appreciated without an understanding of the Declaration of Independence. Spalding’s dramatic retelling and thorough explanation of the Declaration’s making and meaning will capture the heart and instruct the mind of every reader.

To purchase: Encounter Books, Amazon, Barnes & Noble

About the author: <https://dc.hillsdale.edu/Profiles/Matthew-Spalding/>

Dr. Matthew Spalding is the Kirby Professor in Constitutional Government at Hillsdale College and the Dean of the Van Andel Graduate School of Government at Hillsdale College’s Washington, D.C. Campus. As Vice President for Washington Operations, he also oversees the Allan P. Kirby Jr. Center for Constitutional Studies and Citizenship and the academic and educational programs of Hillsdale in the nation’s capital. He is the best-selling author of multiple books, which can be found here, and is the author of the newly-released *The Making of the American Mind: The Story of Our Declaration of Independence*. Hillsdale in D.C. sat down with Dr. Spalding to learn more about his latest book and what readers will gain from it.

Hillsdale College: The Story Of America

Episode 16: John and Abigail Adams

By Hillsdale College. Hillsdale College President Larry Arnn introduces a new video series, “The Story of America,” created in partnership with the White House.

Stories that shaped a nation. Faced with a choice between freedom and tyranny, courageous men and women risked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to form a more perfect union—the United States of America. As our nation marks its 250th anniversary, we invite you to watch and learn from these fascinating stories that celebrate the American spirit.

Episode 16 (12mins 09secs; April 17 2026): Most are familiar with John Adams and his many contributions to America’s Founding. Much less is talked about the woman he married: Abigail Adams. Join us in our latest Story of America video with Dr. Susan Hanssen, Associate Professor of History at the University of Dallas.



The Founding Family That Paid the Highest Price

Weep with Abigail as she mourns the loss of a child, alone while John was away. Draw strength from the Scripture as Abigail did. Learn from her encouragement and steadfast support of her husband and how her advice helped shape the American Founding.

Access the video (12mins 09secs): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Np7SbyODXQc&t=11s>

Watch the series so far! https://storyofamerica.hillsdale.edu/#watch_series

Support Hillsdale College: <https://secured.hillsdale.edu/hillsdale/support-hillsdale-college...>

Visit our website: <http://hillsdale.edu>

Learn from our online courses: <http://online.hillsdale.edu>

Read Imprimis: <https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/>

Hillsdale College is an independent institution of higher learning founded in 1844 by men and women “grateful to God for the inestimable blessings” resulting from civil and religious liberty and “believing that the diffusion of learning is essential to the perpetuity of these blessings.” It pursues the stated object of the founders: “to furnish all persons who wish, irrespective of nation, color, or sex, a literary, scientific, [and] theological education” outstanding among American colleges “and to combine with this such moral and social instruction as will best develop the minds and improve the hearts of its pupils.” As a nonsectarian Christian institution, Hillsdale College maintains “by precept and example” the immemorial teachings and practices of the Christian faith.

The College also considers itself a trustee of our Western philosophical and theological inheritance tracing to Athens and Jerusalem, a heritage finding its clearest expression in the American experiment of self-government under law.

By training the young in the liberal arts, Hillsdale College prepares students to become leaders worthy of that legacy. By encouraging the scholarship of its faculty, it contributes to the preservation of that legacy for future generations. By publicly defending that legacy, it enlists the aid of other friends of free civilization and thus secures the conditions of its own survival and independence.

We the People of Interest

Revolutionary War Soldiers Are Finally Laid To Rest In Lake George

Continental Army soldiers' remains unearthed seven years ago in Lake George are moved to a new memorial.

By Gwendolyn Craig originally published in Adirondack Explorer (May 20 2026)



Patriot Riders hold flags as a dedicated flag is raised after 36 of the 40 caskets containing remains of Revolutionary War soldiers and citizens are interred at the *Repose of the Fallen* memorial in Lake George Battlefield on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, in Lake George. Photo by Cindy Schultz

Seven years ago, Lisa Anderson surveyed what then seemed like an insurmountable task: sifting 70 dump-truck piles of soil filled with 18th-century human bones.

It took 15 months of sifting and years of piecing back together what they could of the Continental Army soldiers. Anderson, one of the bioarchaeologists at the New York State Museum, would count femurs and 833 teeth to determine that contractors digging an apartment building foundation in the village of Lake George had disturbed 44 graves.

Most of the remains were that of young men in their teens and twenties and a few older than 40. One was a child younger than 10 and one was a young woman.

On Wednesday, they all made their final tour from the laboratories of the museum in Albany, to their resting place at a new memorial site called "*Repose of the Fallen*" off Fort George Road in Lake George Battlefield Park.

The NY-Penn Military Vehicle Collectors Club carried the remains in four of nine military vehicles from the Vietnam and Korean wars. They were flanked by police, sheriff's officers and members of the Patriot Guard Riders' motorcycle club.

Jim Marshall, assistant state captain for the Patriot Guard Riders of New York, has ridden "700 or 800" missions escorting fallen soldiers and first responders to their final resting place. But Wednesday's motorcade proved especially memorable for the volunteer group.

"Why this one here is even more special is because these are the veterans who stood up, in the very beginning, to create this country," Marshall said. "We normally stand for veterans who are defending this country and standing for what we already have."

Many of the 35 volunteer riders were from New York state, but two — Raymond "Rusty" Fancher and his wife Mary — drove all the way from Virginia to join the Patriot Guard's escort. It's the farthest the couple has traveled for such an event.

"It's really an honor. I couldn't turn it down," said Raymond Fancher, a veteran of the army and FBI.

From 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the motorcade travelled north on state Route 9, with stops in downtown Saratoga Springs and Glens Falls for observances before arriving in Lake George.

The day had started cloudy, but as the motorcade approached the memorial site, the sun broke through. A crowd encircled the marble columbaria to witness the end of an extraordinary journey, both in time and space.

Patriot Guard Riders and members of the NY-Penn Military Vehicle Collectors Club carried the pine caskets, 28-inches long, 12-inches wide and 8-inches tall made by the Northeastern Woodworkers Association, and placed them in the marble shelves. Each box is labeled with a number.

Rev. Joseph Busch of Sacred Heart Church in Lake George, led a prayer.

"We must remember that behind every uniform is a heart of courage, the story of sacrifice, a life dedicated to greater good," he said.

Four of the caskets containing the most complete skeletons will be laid to rest during a public memorial on Friday. They were draped in flags: three Grand Union Flags, the predecessor to Betsy Ross' design, and one First Pennsylvania Battalion flag to honor the soldier found with a battalion button nestled in his rib cage, said Larry Arnold, trustee with the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance.

Most of these Revolutionary War soldiers' uniforms would have been burned. They were likely sick with smallpox or some other disease, following their unsuccessful attack on Canada in 1776. In 1775 and 1776, the southern shore of Lake George was the site of a smallpox hospital, where historians say up to 1,000 people died. Soldiers often travelled with their families, so Anderson and her colleagues were not surprised that a child and woman were among the young men.

She looked out at the memorial site overlooking Lake George. "It's kind of overwhelming, but in a good way," Anderson said, noting that it was seven years to the day when she and volunteers began sifting. "So many other people are feeling very much involved and wanting to honor these people."

Dan Barusch, town of Lake George planning and zoning director, has ushered the project from the beginning while fielding new zoning protocols in an attempt to avoid disturbing other remains believed to be in the area.

One of the five columbaria are for about a dozen French and Indian War remains that were found at Fort William Henry in the 1990s. Another will remain empty with the anticipation of unearthing more remains in the future, Barusch said.

That's another piece to this story that Anderson is grateful has changed from this experience.

At the time of the initial recovery—the majority of it started on May 20, 2019—New York was one of four states in the country without a law to protect unmarked graves.

The case would spark the "Unmarked Burial Site Protection Act," which passed in 2023. The law requires specific protocol when human remains are found. It also makes it illegal and a possible misdemeanor to not report the discovery of human remains or funerary objects, or to intentionally remove them. And it makes it a potential felony to knowingly destroy a burial site, human remains or funerary objects.

Times Union features reporter Katherine Kiessling contributed to this report.

Access the article: <https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/communities/history/revolutionary-war-soldiers-are-finally-laid-to-rest-on-lake-george/>

PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION: MEMORIAL DAY, 2026

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION – May 25 2026

The greatest fighting force the world has ever known is built upon the extraordinary service of selfless men and women who safeguard our liberty and preserve our way of life. Since the birth of our Nation nearly 250 years ago, countless souls have lost their lives in this noble and righteous pursuit. On Memorial Day, we honor these American heroes.

America endures in strength, power, and prosperity because of the awe-inspiring selflessness and valor of those in uniform willing to lay down their lives in its defense. From the frozen fields of Valley Forge and the beaches of Normandy to the jungles of Vietnam and the mountains of Afghanistan, the sacrifice across our Armed Forces is the foundation upon which our Republic stands. Today, we especially remember the 13 members of the Joint Force who have fallen in support of Operation Epic Fury to defend our national security and preserve the blessings of liberty for future generations. These warfighters lost their lives for freedom's cause and we will never forget the cost.

All Americans inherit the glorious gift of liberty that has been purchased with the spilled blood of brave warriors and the tears and heartache of those they left behind. It is fitting and necessary for our Nation to pause for an annual reminder of the enduring and perilously high cost of freedom, but the immeasurable gravity of what has been sacrificed for the greater good deserves our eternal reverence and unwavering gratitude every day.

On this solemn day, the First Lady and I ask you to join us in prayer for lasting peace in this volatile world, for the protection of those in harm's way, and for the grace of Almighty God to comfort all who grieve.

In honor of all of our fallen heroes, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 11, 1950, as amended (36 U.S.C. 116), has requested the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106-579, has also designated 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe, in their own way, the National Moment of Remembrance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 25, 2026, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11:00 a.m. of that day as a time when people might unite in prayer. I ask all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. I also request the Governors of the United States and its Territories, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that on Memorial Day the flag be flown at half-staff until noon on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request citizens to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fiftieth.

DONALD J. TRUMP

Access the Presidential Proclamation: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/05/memorial-day-2026/>

And Here Is How NJ's Top Democratic Leaders Decided To Honor Memorial Day, Shamefully

Mikie Sherrill Leads Sanctuary Politicians in Anti-ICE Protest That Ended with Tear Gas on Memorial Day

By Phil Stilton originally published in Shore News Network (May 25 2026)

Sherrill, Kim and other New Jersey sanctuary politicians draw criticism after chaotic scenes erupt outside Delaney Hall.

While most New Jersey families spent Memorial Day honoring fallen service members or heading to the Shore for the unofficial start of summer, a very different scene unfolded outside the Delaney Hall ICE detention facility in Newark. It wasn't the unruly teens at the Jersey Shore causing havoc on this sacred day, it was the Democrat leaders of New Jersey who organized what is being called 'political theater' that ended with riot police and pepperspray.

Instead of beach traffic and boardwalk crowds dominating headlines, the state's top Democratic politicians found themselves at the center of a tense and highly political confrontation involving immigration activists, federal agents, and detainees staging a hunger strike.

New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill, Sen. Andy Kim, and several other Democratic figures — including Sen. Cory Booker, Rep. LaMonica McIver, and Rep. Robert Menendez Jr. — appeared publicly in support of protesters gathered outside the privately operated detention facility.

Governor Sherrill left before the police response began, leading some to question whether or not she had advanced warning from her State Police detail.

"I'm deeply disturbed by reports of the poor conditions at Delaney Hall. Unsafe, inhumane, and unconstitutional living conditions are completely unacceptable," the governor said. "I have long opposed private detention facilities and advocated against them. I will continue to call for the closure of Delaney Hall because of reports like these."

She left before all hell broke loose.

The demonstrations escalated throughout Memorial Day as activists formed human chains, blocked vehicles, and erected makeshift barricades around the property in an effort to disrupt ICE operations.

According to protesters and local reports, federal agents in riot gear used pepper spray and batons early Monday morning after crowds attempted to prevent vehicles from entering or leaving the facility.

The Delaney Hall confrontation now appears poised to become another flashpoint in the broader national fight over immigration enforcement, sanctuary policies, and the role Democratic officials play in opposing federal ICE operations.

For Republicans and immigration hardliners, the images from Newark reinforced arguments that Democratic leaders are aligning themselves with activists attempting to obstruct federal law enforcement.

For Democrats and immigration advocates, the events represented what they describe as growing concern over detainee treatment and aggressive federal enforcement tactics.

Either way, Memorial Day in Newark became less about remembrance and more about a rapidly escalating political and cultural battle playing out directly outside an ICE detention center, led by radical sanctuary state politicians.

Access the full article: <https://www.shorenewsnetwork.com/mikie-sherrill-leads-sanctuary-politicians-in-anti-ice-protest-that-ended-with-tear-gas-on-memorial-day/>

On June 6th, 1944 They Carried The Flag Of Freedom ~ Now It's Our Turn

Years ago, more than 150,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen fought to secure and ensure freedom for the world during D-Day. Liberty was their gift. And it's our duty to protect and defend it.

Though we may not be called upon to serve on the battlefield as they did, we can honor, learn and serve the cause of freedom in big and small ways.

Whether it's volunteering to make a difference for others in our communities, supporting today's military volunteers as they defend freedom around the world, or simply visiting the National D-Day Memorial and teaching future generations about the importance of service, we all have a duty to keep the spirit of D-Day alive each and every day.



Photo courtesy National D-Day Memorial Foundation/Ashlee Glen

Access the National D-Day Memorial - Carry The Flag: <https://www.dday.org/carry-the-flag/>

This Great and Noble Undertaking. The Story of the National D-Day Memorial: <https://www.dday.org/learn/about-the-memorial-and-bedford/>

Our New Jersey Signers Of The Declaration Of Independence

Publishers note: As we near July 2026, our 250th Semiquincentennial, we wanted to encourage getting to know our esteemed New Jersey Signers of the Declaration of Independence. From November 2025 through March 2026 we featured our five heroic NJ Signers. They truly did pledge their Lives, their Fortunes and their Sacred Honor. They all deserve our utmost gratitude and we should all take the time to learn, remember and pass on the stories and legacy of these unsung heroes of American history.

- **Abraham Clark** (featured in January 2026: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/0126-MercerWe-revised.pdf>)
- **John Hart** (featured in November 2025: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/1125-MercerWe.pdf>)
- **Francis Hopkinson** (featured in February 2026: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/0226-MercerWe-revised.pdf>)
- **Richard Stockton** (featured in March 2026: <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/0326-MercerWe.pdf>)
- **John Witherspoon** (featured in December 2025): <https://mercervethepeople.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/1225-MercerWe.pdf>)

Freedom 250: Signers Of The Declaration Of Independence

Celebrating the Triumph of the American Spirit

On July 4, 2026, America will celebrate the most important milestone in our country's history—250 years of American Independence. "With a single sheet of parchment and 56 signatures, America began the greatest political journey in human history," said President Trump of this momentous anniversary.

Under the President's leadership, the Salute to America 250 Task Force ("Task Force 250") is executing a full year of festivities, which began on Memorial Day, 2025, and will continue through the end of 2026.

The White House is engaging all levels of government, the private sector, non-profit and educational institutions, and every citizen across the country to celebrate this historic milestone. To achieve this ambitious vision, we have created a new public-private partnership called Freedom 250.

Task Force 250 aims to inspire a renewed love for American history, encourage citizens to experience the beauty of our country, ignite a spirit of adventure and innovation to help our nation succeed for the next 250 years, and invite Americans to pray for our country and our people and rededicate ourselves as One Nation Under God.

From the Freedom 250 website watch a brief video and read a brief bio on each of the Declaration of Independence Signers: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/freedom250/founders-museum/signers/profiles/>



Painting: The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776. Artist: John Trumbull, 1817-1818. Location: Capitol Rotunda.

Presidential Message On National Day Of Prayer

By The White House originally published in The White House (May 6 2026)

This National Day of Prayer, we honor America's enduring tradition of prayer, faith, and trust in Almighty God. And as we celebrate 250 glorious years of American independence, we pledge to never forget the countless blessings God has bestowed upon our people and our country.

From the cradles of civilization in the ancient world to the Christian empires of medieval Europe and the miraculous founding of our own Nation, the entire Western experience has been connected by a golden thread of devotion to God. America's faith was seen most prominently during our struggle for independence, when the Second Continental Congress declared a day of "humiliation, fasting, and prayer" to seek God's providence and ask for His protection and blessing in their fight for freedom, virtue, and posterity.

Just weeks later, armed with unshakable faith, the Colonies declared their independence from Great Britain on July 4, 1776, and paved the way for freedom's ultimate victory five years later at Yorktown. In the years since, this proud birthright of faith moved our Nation to expand the promise of independence to the furthest reaches of our continent; preserve our Union in the midst of a bloody Civil War; abolish slavery; win two world wars; defeat the evil forces of atheistic communism; plant our Flag on the Moon; and advance truth, beauty, and goodness in our culture every single day.

Today, faith in God is resurging on American shores like never before. Throughout this historic year, we rejoice in the triumph of the American spirit and in the love and grace of Almighty God. And just as our Founders came together in prayer before declaring independence, thousands of Americans will gather on Sunday, May 17, on the National Mall to rededicate the United States as One Nation Under God.

This National Day of Prayer, we proudly recommit to our magnificent birthright of faith. I encourage all Americans to come together today in prayer, reflecting on the many blessings God has given our Nation and asking for His continued protection, with ceremonies, events, and programs in their houses of worship and places of work, schools, and homes. Above all, we pledge that America will always, as it is written in Psalm 96, "Tell His glory among the nations"—and that we will never forget God's role in creating, protecting, and sustaining the freest, strongest, most prosperous, and greatest country the world has ever known.

Access the Presidential Message: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2026/05/presidential-message-on-national-day-of-prayer/>

Psalm 23: <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Psalms-Chapter-23/>

A Psalm of David.

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

*4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*

Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley Newsletters:

Access previous issues at: <https://hvrageop.org/mercervethepeople/>

To report a correction or share feedback, please email us at info@mercervethepeople.com

Mercer We the People

PO Box 332, Titusville NJ 08560
United States of America