



NEWSLETTER

July 2026 ISSUE#: HV029

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

Happy Birthday America 250!

July 4th (2026)

"...will be the most memorable Epocha, in the History of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more. You will think me transported with Enthusiasm but I am not. I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration, and support and defend these States. Yet through all the Gloom I can see the Rays of ravishing Light and Glory. I can see that the End is more than worth all the Means. And that Posterity will triumph in that Days Transaction, even altho We should rue it, which I trust in God We shall not."

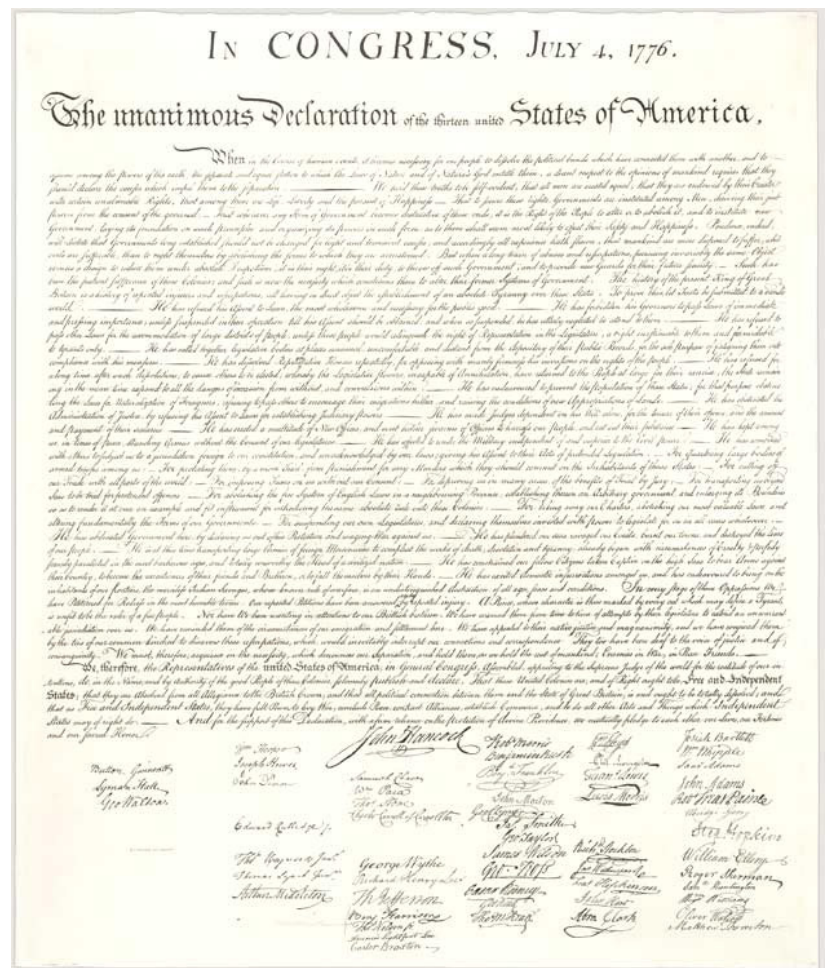
- John Adams July 3, 1776

Source: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalmall4th/history-of-independence-day.htm>

Stone Engraving of the Declaration of Independence.

In 1820, the Declaration of Independence was already showing signs of age. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams commissioned printer William J. Stone to make a full-size copperplate engraving. This plate was used to print copies of the Declaration. The 1823 Stone engraving is the most frequently reproduced version of the Declaration.

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration>



Declaration Of Independence: A Transcription

Note: The following text is a transcription of the Stone Engraving of the parchment Declaration of Independence (the document on display in the Rotunda at the National Archives Museum). **The spelling and punctuation reflect the original.**

In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent

States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Georgia

Button Gwinnett
Lyman Hall
George Walton

North Carolina

William Hooper
Joseph Hewes
John Penn

South Carolina

Edward Rutledge
Thomas Heyward, Jr.
Thomas Lynch, Jr.
Arthur Middleton

Massachusetts

John Hancock
Samuel Adams
John Adams
Robert Treat Paine
Elbridge Gerry
Rhode Island
Stephen Hopkins
William Ellery

Maryland

Samuel Chase
William Paca
Thomas Stone
Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia

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

Pennsylvania

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

Delaware

Caesar Rodney
George Read
Thomas McKean

New York

William Floyd
Philip Livingston
Francis Lewis
Lewis Morris

New Jersey

Richard Stockton
John Witherspoon
Francis Hopkinson
John Hart
Abraham Clark

Connecticut

Roger Sherman
Samuel Huntington
William Williams

New Hampshire

Josiah Bartlett
William Whipple
Oliver Wolcott
Matthew Thornton

Declaration of Independence Transcription: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

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Election



What Is The Faulkner Act? NJ Home Rule Explained

The Faulkner Act gives New Jersey municipalities flexibility in how they govern and lets residents have a real say in local government structure.

By LegalClarity originally published in LegalClarity.org (May 13 2026)

New Jersey's Optional Municipal Charter Law, widely known as the Faulkner Act, gives every municipality in the state the power to choose its own form of local government. Codified at N.J.S.A. 40:69A-1, the law was enacted in 1950 based on recommendations from a legislative commission appointed two years earlier to modernize local governance. Rather than forcing every town into a single template, the Act offers four distinct government structures and equips residents with direct democratic tools, including initiative, referendum, and recall.

Home Rule and the Purpose of the Faulkner Act

Before the Faulkner Act, most New Jersey municipalities operated under rigid legislative charters that left little room to tailor government to local needs. The Act replaced that one-size-fits-all approach with a home rule framework, meaning each community can adopt and modify a charter that fits its size, priorities, and administrative demands. Home rule allocates genuine autonomy to local government rather than treating every town as a mere extension of the state legislature.

That autonomy has limits. State law still takes precedence where it explicitly preempts local action, and any charter adopted under the Faulkner Act must comply with the broader requirements of the statute. But within those boundaries, a Faulkner Act municipality has wide latitude to organize its departments, set local policy, and structure its leadership.

The Four Forms of Government

The Faulkner Act offers four optional plans. Each distributes power differently between elected officials and professional administrators, so the right choice depends on whether a community wants strong executive leadership, professional management, or something in between.

Mayor-Council Plan

The Mayor-Council plan creates a strong executive. The mayor prepares the annual budget, supervises all municipal departments, and appoints and removes department heads. The council serves as the legislative branch, passing ordinances and providing oversight but staying out of day-to-day administration. This separation of powers is the sharpest of the four plans.

Council-Manager Plan

Under the Council-Manager plan, the elected council hires a professional municipal manager who serves as the chief executive and administrative official. The manager handles daily operations, prepares the budget, and makes personnel decisions. The council retains control over policy and legislation. The mayor in this system is typically a council member who handles ceremonial duties rather than wielding broad executive authority. Communities that want professional management insulated from election cycles tend to favor this structure.

Small Municipality Plan

Municipalities with fewer than 12,000 residents can adopt the Small Municipality plan, which combines executive and legislative functions in a single governing body. The default structure is a mayor and two council members (three total), but the charter commission or voters can specify a council of five or seven members instead.¹ Council members serve three-year terms and are elected at large. This streamlined arrangement makes sense for smaller communities where a full separation of powers would create unnecessary overhead.

Mayor-Council-Administrator Plan

The Mayor-Council-Administrator plan blends elected leadership with professional management. The mayor holds executive authority and appoints department heads with the council's advice and consent, but the municipality also employs a professional administrator who supervises the daily operations of each department. The administrator serves during the mayor's term and can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the council. Think of it as the Mayor-Council plan with a built-in layer of professional oversight.

Ward vs. At-Large Representation

When adopting a plan under the Faulkner Act, municipalities also decide whether council members represent geographic wards or the community at large. This choice has real consequences for how responsive government is to different neighborhoods.

In a ward system, the municipality is divided into geographic districts of roughly equal population, and each ward elects its own council member. Ward representation tends to increase the voice of specific neighborhoods and improve descriptive representation of racial and ethnic minority groups. The tradeoff is that ward-based councils can become more factionalized, with members focused on their own districts rather than the municipality as a whole.

At-large elections, where every voter selects every council member, encourage a broader perspective on policy but can dilute the influence of geographically concentrated minority communities. Historically, at-large systems have sometimes been used to weaken minority voting power. Most Faulkner Act plans default to at-large elections but allow municipalities to switch to wards through charter recommendations or amendments.

Citizen Powers: Initiative, Referendum, and Recall

The Faulkner Act gives registered voters three powerful tools to shape local government directly, without waiting for elected officials to act.

Initiative

The initiative allows citizens to propose new local ordinances. To place a proposed ordinance before the council, a petition must carry signatures from legal voters equal to at least 15 percent of the total votes cast in the municipality at the most recent General Assembly election. A lower threshold of 10 percent is also available, though it comes with additional procedural restrictions. If the council does not adopt the proposed ordinance, it goes on the ballot for a public vote.

Referendum

The referendum lets citizens challenge an ordinance that the governing body has already passed. A protest petition must be filed with the municipal clerk within 20 days of the ordinance's final passage, signed by voters equal to at least 15 percent of the total votes cast at the last General Assembly election. Once a valid petition is certified, the ordinance is suspended until voters decide the question at an election. The 20-day window is tight, so organizers need to move quickly after an unpopular ordinance passes.

Recall

Any elected official in a Faulkner Act municipality can be removed from office through a recall election, but only after serving at least one year and only for cause connected to the office. A recall petition must be signed by at least 25 percent of the municipality's registered voters and must state the specific grounds for removal. Once the municipal clerk certifies the petition, the official has five days to resign. If they don't, a recall election is scheduled between 60 and 90 days later. Removal requires a majority of those voting on the question.

Changing Your Municipality's Government

The Faulkner Act provides two paths for a municipality to adopt a new form of government: a charter study commission or a direct petition. Both begin with citizen signatures and end with a vote, but they differ in how much research happens in between.

Charter Study Commission Path

The more thorough route starts with a petition to create a five-member charter study commission. The petition must be signed by a percentage of the municipality's registered voters based on population:

- 7,000 residents or fewer: 25 percent of registered voters
- 7,001 to 69,999 residents: 20 percent of registered voters
- 70,000 or more residents: 10 percent of registered voters

The petition must name five candidates for the commission and include each signer's printed name and residential address. Organizers should obtain the official petition format from the municipal clerk to ensure all required headers and statements are correct.

After the petition is filed, the municipal clerk has 20 days to verify signatures and certify the results. If everything checks out, the question of creating a charter study commission goes on the ballot alongside the five nominated candidates. A simple majority approves the study.

Once elected, the charter study commission has nine months to study the current government structure, compare it with other forms available under New Jersey law, and issue a report with findings and recommendations. The commission files its final report with the municipal clerk. If circumstances change, the commission can publish an amended report up to one year after the original.

Direct Petition Path

Voters who already know which plan they want can skip the charter study entirely. A direct petition designating a specific optional plan triggers a referendum on that plan alone. The signature thresholds are the same as for a charter study petition (25, 20, or 10 percent of registered voters depending on population). If a majority votes yes, the municipality adopts the designated plan.

The direct petition path is faster but riskier. Without a commission to study the options and educate voters, the community may not fully understand the structural changes they're voting on. Charter study commissions often produce detailed public reports that help residents make informed decisions.

The Election and Transition Process

After voters approve a new government plan, the municipality transitions to the new structure on a specific timeline that depends on whether the community holds May or November elections.

The first election of new officers cannot occur sooner than 75 days after adoption if all council members are elected at large, or 120 days if the municipality is divided into wards. For May-election municipalities, the first election takes place on the second Tuesday in May meeting that minimum. For November-election municipalities, it occurs at the next general election meeting the threshold.

The new government officially takes effect at noon on July 1 following a May election or at noon on January 1 following a November election. Between the election and the date new officials take office, no new positions can be created and no new appointments can be made. This blackout period prevents outgoing officials from packing the government before the transition.

Adopting an Administrative Code

Within 90 days after the first council organizes under the new plan, the governing body must adopt an administrative code by ordinance. This code lays out the duties and powers of all municipal officers, describes how departments are organized, establishes lines of authority, and restates the major provisions of the new charter alongside applicable general law. It becomes the operating manual for the new government and takes effect 30 days after adoption. Missing this 90-day deadline doesn't automatically invalidate the government, but it leaves the municipality operating without a formal framework — a situation that invites confusion over who has authority to do what.

Access the article: <https://legalclarity.org/what-is-the-faulkner-act-nj-home-rule-explained/>
Faulkner Act (Optional Municipal Charter Law): https://newjersey.wiki/a/Faulkner_Act

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

HVRATM

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



Four Questions For The Hopewell Township Committee

By Dufresne

I ask that citizens of Hopewell Township ask the following questions of the Hopewell Township Committee. Since the Committee rarely provide straight-forward responses, numerous attempts may be required.

1. Many residents of Hopewell Township requested that the Hopewell Township Committee meet the last round of its affordable housing obligation with some 100% affordable housing in order to avoid at least some of the impact on our schools and other services from the building of 1000s of new market rate homes. We were all told that 100% affordable housing would create an undesirable ghetto and would place a huge economic burden on the township, most notably the cost of sewer capacity for such a development. We now note that the Hopewell Township Committee plans to use 100% affordable housing to meet all or most of its new affordable housing obligation. That's very good news, but we nonetheless should ask: What changed?
2. During the last round, the Hopewell Township Committee insisted that there would be very little impact on the School District. There is nothing to be gained by us saying "WE TOLD YOU SO." But now that we have clarity and we know now that the impact is huge, as evidenced by the substantial increases in school district funding, will the Hopewell Township Committee commit to providing the School District with more than 50% of the funding it receive this year from the PILOTs to the School District to relieve the impact of all the new school children and the absence of tax contributions from the new PILOT communities?
3. Will the Hopewell Township Committee require that all applications for Data Centers be self-sustaining... that they recirculate water rather than remove it from the aquifer that serves our residents, that they generate their own power rather than drive up residential electric bills, and that they comply with all County and Hopewell Township regulations, most notably our sound ordinances?

4. Will the Hopewell Township Committee confirm that no undocumented immigrants are being detained at the Mercer County Detention Center. You might argue that such policy is outside your purview, but the Hopewell Township Committee in 2001 succeeded in removing undocumented immigrants from the facility.

Wishing everyone a wonderful 250th!

Here's To Another 250 Years (We Hope)

By American Anonymous

Happy 250th Birthday America!

It's wonderful to see all the celebrations lately. It's a day we shouldn't take for granted. If we aren't careful, in another 250 years Independence Day could be no more than a quaint memory of a nation long gone. By then we might be called The Autonomous Collective of Human Persons Formerly Known as The Evil Racist Colonizing Slaveholding USA.

Perhaps the better number to reflect on today is: 25.

It's been 25 years since 19 guests we welcomed into our country used our own soil to prepare a terrorist attack against us, studying at our own flight schools and using our own commercial planes to murder nearly 3,000 people in one day.

My message here is not about immigration: it's about vigilance. 9/11 isn't over.

All 19 terrorists died that day, but their agenda didn't magically die with them. If anything, it has amplified and morphed over these 25 years, creeping into every crevice it can find to sow division and hatred of the USA and its freedoms.

It feeds upon our "Minnesota nice" culture and national guilt over our ancestors' decisions, widening rifts of conscience, spreading a narrative that western democracies are uniquely evil while global neighbors in South America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia are innocent lambs with blameless pasts, victims of the US and UK's craven world domination. Unfortunately, useful fools are plentiful in media, entertainment, and education, so many of our nation's young people are falling for this ruse.

The entirety of human history consists of civilizations rising, then falling, either being absorbed into other civilizations or disappearing entirely. Too many Americans think it can't happen to us. But our nation's enemies are smart, motivated and organized. Meanwhile we've become ignorant, complacent and fractured.

Radical Islamicists are open and honest about their goal to destroy western civilization and replace it with something better. (I admit there are days when I wonder if we should just let them take over... at least they're more likely to keep men out of the women's bathroom.) Jihadists have learned well from China and Russia that the pen is mightier than the sword. The U.S. is more easily destroyed from within, by playing the long game. It's a game that started before I was born in the 1970s, but over the course of my lifetime I've watched it grow stronger and succeed in areas, especially in our media/entertainment industrial complex.

Instead of hijacking planes and crashing them into buildings, our enemies hijack minds through words and manipulation, crashing them into structural institutions in our social, educational, labor, and governmental systems. Confusion and disorder follow. Social cohesion and respect for authority diminishes. It's the Mao playbook on steroids, with the help of web bots, AI, and deep-pocketed moguls like Roy Neville Singham. Voters hardly know what to believe anymore. This hijacking of the public consciousness is already bearing fruit in NY/NJ election victories of late. Copy and paste our area's Democratic Socialist winners into elected offices of national importance a few years from now, and we have a real recipe for trouble.

We've been through hard times before, and I hope we can make it through this one too. Together. We have to unify, use our words wisely, and stop burying our heads in the sand if we hope for future generations to enjoy another 250 years of American Freedom.

Civility Project: Civility Starts With Us

Spotlight

Originally published in New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) (June 2026)

Working to Increase Civility and Improve School Governance.

Keeping things civil in local government has grown difficult in today's fractious political environment. From contentious school board meetings to personal attacks on social media, civility is being challenged. For that reason, the New Jersey School Boards Association identified promoting civility in school board governance as a top priority.

Numerous polls, published by various organizations such as the **Pew Research Center**, **American Bar Association** and the **Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation**, have found that the majority of Americans feel that the rhetoric of public discourse has deteriorated in recent years. The polls also show that Americans want it to improve. This confirms what most of

us have been hearing and experiencing anecdotally. The lack of civility in public discourse is not just at the federal level, but is being felt at all levels of government, including local school boards.

This increased incivility comes at a cost to our communities and our students. It reduces citizens' trust in their elected officials. It dissuades people from getting involved and serving on a local school board. It can also make the local board less effective as a governing body.

At the core of NJSBA's work is advancing public education and promoting the achievement of all students through effective governance. While increasing civility is a task that NJSBA has helped districts achieve for many years through training programs, there is a need to refocus on and reinforce civility now more than ever. Civility cannot be taken for granted; it needs to be nurtured.

To meet this demand, NJSBA has partnered with the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University to provide additional resources to help our local boards develop techniques for having more fruitful public discourse.

This webpage is designed to provide information and resources to help your board have more respectful and effective meetings.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments on this initiative, please get in touch with us at civility@njsba.org.

What is Civility?

Civility can mean different things to different people, so as NJSBA launches its "Civility Starts with Us" initiative, it helps to begin with a shared understanding of what the word really represents.

The term itself comes from the Latin *civilis*, referring to the conduct, character and responsibilities expected of a citizen. For the ancient Greeks and Romans, civility wasn't just a nicety. It was the foundation of democratic life. The founding fathers of the United States held a similar belief. They understood that democracy depends on open discussion, tolerance for differing viewpoints and the ability to debate without tearing a nation apart.

It's just as important to be clear about what civility is *not*. It isn't simply being polite. It isn't about suppressing free speech or avoiding disagreement. It doesn't mean giving in, and it certainly isn't something we can assume will take care of itself.

Civility in public discourse is about disagreeing with respect. It's listening to understand, not just to reply. It's acknowledging differences, seeking common ground and looking for opportunities to collaborate or compromise. It's choosing to be courteous even when conversations become difficult.

Maintaining civility during tense political moments is challenging, but for public servants, it's essential. It shapes how we serve, how we communicate and ultimately how we strengthen our communities.

Civility Pledge – "I pledge to build a stronger and more effective school board by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions to improve my school district and the children of my community."

Resources

- Civility Resolution (Downloadable Resolution for Boards to Pass): <https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/civility-resolution.docx>
- Civility Pledge (Downloadable Pledge): <https://www.njsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/civility-pledge.pdf>

Districts that Passed the Resolution

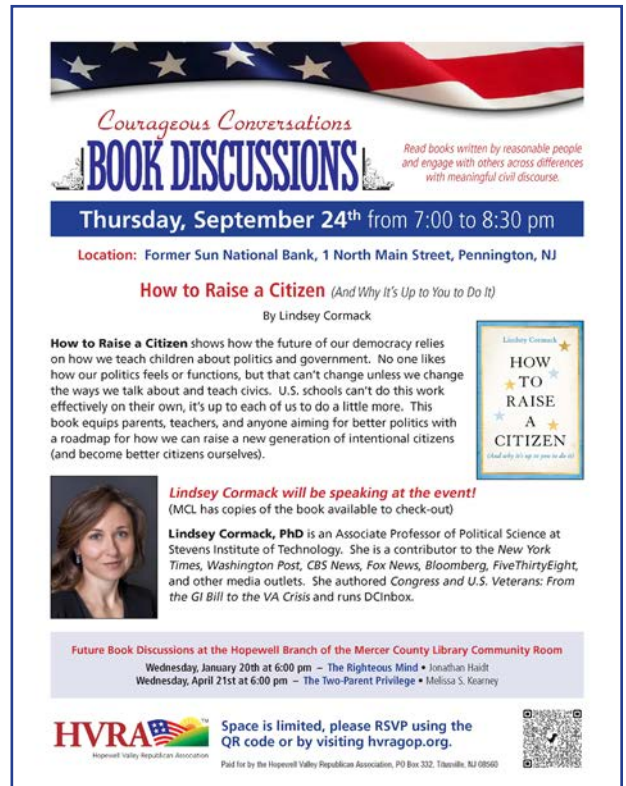
- Sparta Township BOE (Sussex County)
- Great Meadows Regional BOE (Warren County)
- Westampton Township BOE (Burlington County)
- Henry Hudson Regional BOE (Monmouth County)
- Clementon BOE (Camden County)
- Somerdale Park BOE (Camden County)

Access the full article: <https://www.njsba.org/civility-project/>

Courageous Conversations Book Discussion Series: 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 PLEASE RSVP at <https://evite.me/stmYPkugg4>.



Courageous Conversations
BOOK DISCUSSIONS

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

Thursday, September 24th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm

Location: Former Sun National Bank, 1 North Main Street, Pennington, NJ

How to Raise a Citizen (And Why It's Up to You to Do It)
By Lindsey Cormack

How to Raise a Citizen shows how the future of our democracy relies on how we teach children about politics and government. No one likes how our politics feels or functions, but that can't change unless we change the ways we talk about and teach civics. U.S. schools can't do this work effectively on their own, it's up to each of us to do a little more. This book equips parents, teachers, and anyone aiming for better politics with a roadmap for how we can raise a new generation of intentional citizens (and become better citizens ourselves).

Lindsey Cormack will be speaking at the event!
(MCL has copies of the book available to check-out)

Lindsey Cormack, PhD is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Stevens Institute of Technology. She is a contributor to the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *CBS News*, *Fox News*, *Bloomberg*, *FiveThirtyEight*, and other media outlets. She authored *Congress and U.S. Veterans: From the GI Bill to the VA Crisis* and runs DCinabox.

Future Book Discussions at the Hopewell Branch of the Mercer County Library Community Room
Wednesday, January 20th at 6:00 pm – *The Righteous Mind* • Jonathan Haidt
Wednesday, April 21st at 6:00 pm – *The Two-Parent Privilege* • Melissa S. Kearney

HVRA Hopewell Valley Republican Association
Space is limited, please RSVP using the QR code or by visiting hvragop.org.

Paid for by the Hopewell Valley Republican Association, P.O. Box 332, Titusville, NJ 08560

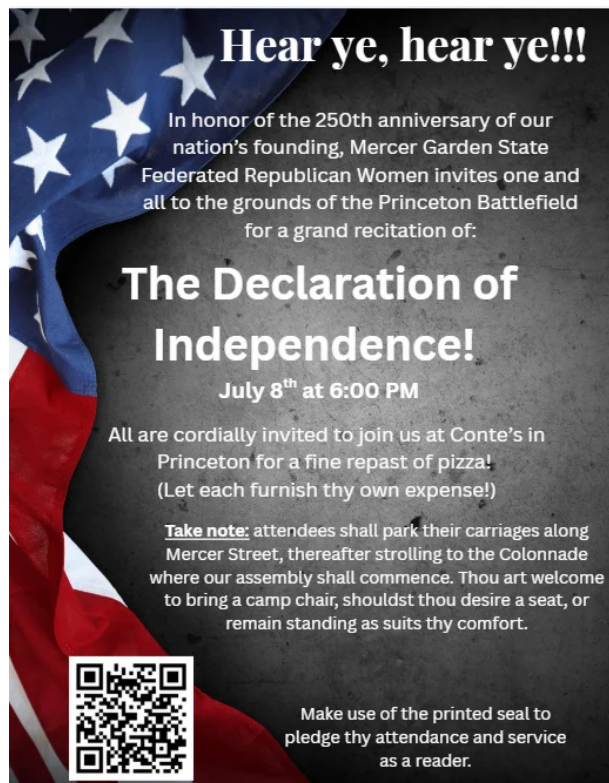
Join Mercer Garden State Federated Republican Women: Recitation Of The Declaration Of Independence

Wednesday, July 8, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Princeton Battlefield State Park in Princeton, NJ

See Flyer below for more details.

Declare attendance: <https://form.jotform.com/251428812355154>



Hear ye, hear ye!!!

In honor of the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding, Mercer Garden State Federated Republican Women invites one and all to the grounds of the Princeton Battlefield for a grand recitation of:

The Declaration of Independence!

July 8th at 6:00 PM

All are cordially invited to join us at Conte's in Princeton for a fine repast of pizza!
(Let each furnish thy own expense!)

Take note: attendees shall park their carriages along Mercer Street, thereafter strolling to the Colonnade where our assembly shall commence. Thou art welcome to bring a camp chair, shouldst thou desire a seat, or remain standing as suits thy comfort.

Make use of the printed seal to pledge thy attendance and service as a reader.



250th ANNIVERSARY
1776-2026

Save The Date

250th Anniversary Dance

September 25, 2026
7:00 P.M. to 12:00 A.M.

Columbus Hall
1451 Klockner Road
Hamilton, NJ 08619

Dance the night away.

WEAR THE ERA OF YOUR CHOICE
1776 - 2026

Contest, Games, Memories & More
Tickets go on sale in August

PD FOR BY MCRC, P.O. BOX 10535 HAMILTON, NJ 08650

Mercer County Republican Committee

<https://www.facebook.com/MercerGOP>
<https://www.instagram.com/realmercernjgop>
<https://x.com/realMercerGOP>

Pizza And Movie Night: The American Miracle Friday July 10 2026 6:00PM

By Titusville Presbyterian Church

Press Release – The American Miracle

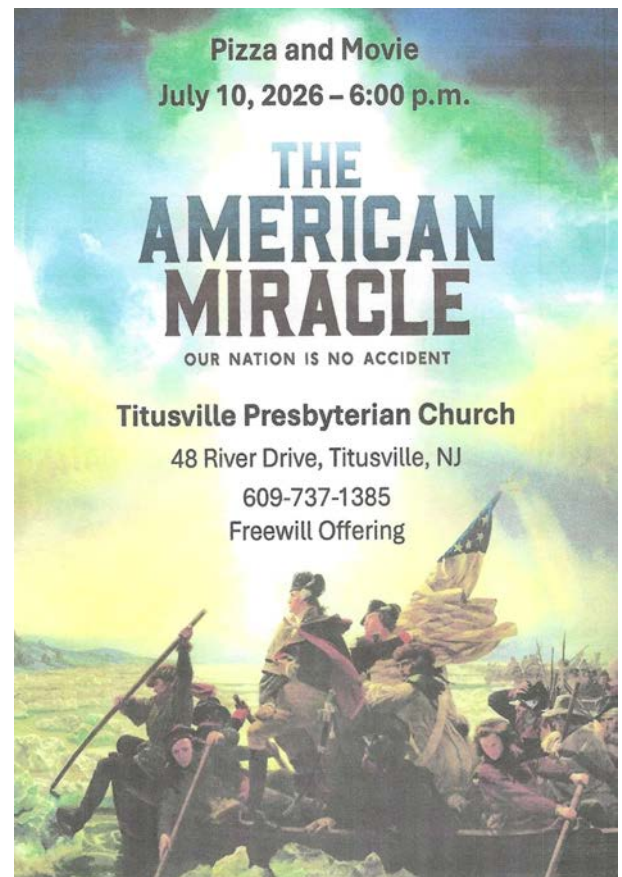
The film “The American Miracle” will be shown at the Titusville Presbyterian Church’s Pizza and Movie” night on Friday, July 10 at 6:00 p.m. Pizza and beverages will be provided. There is no admission charge but a freewill offering will be received. The church is located at 48 River Drive, Titusville, NJ 08560.

What if the establishment of the United States of America, against all odds, was no accident? What if God’s Divine Hand guided the steps of the Founding Fathers, due to their faithfulness to Him and belief in His Providence? What if America is a miracle?

Inspired by New York Times bestselling author Michael Medved’s book of the same title, The American Miracle – Our Nation is No Accident, is an exciting, entertaining, and edifying motion picture experience created by Heroic Pictures in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

For more information please contact the church office at 609-737-1385 or office@titusvillechurch.org.

About the film: <https://americanmiraclemovie.com/>



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 To Host Largest Independence Day Celebration In Its History For America’s 250th Anniversary

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>



Photograph courtesy of Credit Brian M. Hare

Education

What's Happening In HVRSD Schools?

HVRSD Board Of Education Meeting June 15, 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=yWQku2jjQCg>

Next Meeting July 20, 2026 (Regular and Business Organization) at the HVRSD Board Office, 425 Main St, Pennington, NJ

Teacher Pipeline Programs Infiltrated By The Southern Poverty Law Center

A workforce solution has been turned into a social justice factory to indoctrinate children.

By Victoria Manning originally published in Restoration News (June 15 2026)

Grow Your Own (GYO) teachers' programs around the nation that receive federal funding have been hijacked by leftist extremist groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). To tackle the national teacher shortage, school districts have implemented teacher training programs in high schools often in partnership with local colleges. Many of these programs have been infiltrated by outside groups with social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) agendas.

In GYO programs, high school students can take dual-enrollment courses that give them a boost toward a degree path to becoming a teacher. Often local districts will guarantee a job to these students who successfully complete their program and go on to earn a degree.

It's a great idea that's gone astray from its original purpose. Instead, teachers are being indoctrinated in social justice and political agendas that are then used in K-12 classrooms across the country.

High school students in these GYO programs are encouraged to participate in a student organization called Educators Rising, also known as PDK International. Educators Rising is an affiliate group that helps start GYO programs around the nation and they have a presence in all 50 states. In many states, far-left teachers' unions partner with Educators Rising to manage and provide the curriculum.

A federal grant program called the Perkins V is used to help fund these teacher training programs. The U.S. Department of Education should investigate whether these programs violate provisions of the grant or federal law.

Reprogramming Teachers with SPLC Influence

Educators Rising offers micro-credentials for teacher training including "anti-bias instruction" that utilizes components from the controversial Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The SPLC recently made headlines after they were indicted for money laundering and wire fraud in connection with payments they made to violent extremist groups including individuals associated with the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi Party.

The micro-credential instructs students to study the SPLC's Teaching Tolerance program on anti-bias education which focuses on identity, justice, and action. The lessons push anti-American, social justice, activist indoctrination. For example, teachers are taught that if they set up their classroom to include a copy of the Declaration of Independence and quotes from Winston Churchill and Albert Einstein, it wouldn't be a welcoming class because the images are not diverse. The SPLC program also instructs that teachers should use gender-neutral practices because "some students may feel they are truly a different gender than their physical bodies suggest" and may "not fit neatly into either the male or female identity category."

The Educators Rising anti-bias curriculum, created by the SPLC, also encourages teachers to hold "family affinity events" such as events for "families of color" or LGBT families." LGBT Pride events are also pushed as a method to engage with the community. Teachers are told to display signs in their classroom such as "Safe Space (for LGBT Students)" and "No One Is Illegal." Educators should also network with groups such as "Teachers 4 Social Justice" and the "White Privilege Conference."

Restoration News obtained a sample Educators Rising curriculum. It instructs teachers to not focus on American history or culture saying, "Much of the curricula that students learn is based on a Western paradigm in which American history and culture tend to be at the center of. You learn about one side of history without getting context on the other." It further claims "you will grow in your ability to see the implicit thoughts and beliefs that permeate the content you learn." It appears Educators Rising doesn't want students to be taught from an American capitalist perspective.

The curriculum also states, "teachers should use a variety of resources to show students a more accurate and full perspective on marginalized communities, others' lived experiences, and clear up stereotypes, biases, and misconceptions." In other words, teachers must push leftist propaganda to reprogram children's minds.

Educators Rising also emphasizes the racial make-up of teachers in their program with a goal of recruiting new teachers who “reflect the demographics of their communities.”

Educators Rising National Conference

The nation’s two largest far-left teachers’ unions are key sponsors of the Educator’s Rising June 2026 conference in Portland, Oregon. The event includes workshops that push the equity narrative of “culturally responsive” teaching practices. In other words, aspiring teachers will be taught to identify and teach students based on their race, gender, or sexuality. Breakout sessions are focused on equity, culturally responsive teaching, student identity and “collective liberation”—a Marxist notion that no one is free until all are free.

Equity has become a dominant narrative used in public schools across the nation. It shifts the focus from providing equal opportunity to engineering equal outcomes, often sorting students into categories based on race, religion, or sexual identity. It’s often paired with “culturally responsive teaching” practices which directs educators to incorporate students’ racial, cultural, and personal backgrounds of individual students into classroom lessons.

For example, if a student is Muslim or gay, the teacher should provide resources to the whole class that would include the Muslim or gay perspective on a topic. Culturally responsive teaching methods elevate minority groups, and an instructional focus is placed on ensuring curriculum representation of those groups. Educators Rising claims the goal of their culturally responsive teaching is to “better support ethnically diverse students.”

State Level Educators Rising Affiliates

North Carolina - North Carolina Teacher Cadet Program is an official state affiliate of Educators Rising which means students can participate in “sponsored activities, including conferences, competitions, leadership development, and networking events.” The Teacher Cadet program “is a solution for the teacher shortage and the lack of educators who reflect student demographics.” In other words, it pushes a false narrative that teachers who aren’t of the same race as their students aren’t as effective as teachers of the same race.

Pennsylvania - The Pennsylvania GYO program is coordinated by the leftist Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA)—the state teachers union. It uses the SPLC’s anti-bias micro-credential curriculum for its student teachers. Sample lesson plans for students provided by the PSEA teach “In your classrooms, the culture will be shaped by your lessons, environment, your identity, and your students’ identities.” What does a student’s identity have to do with addition and subtraction? The PSEA donated \$210,000 in 2024 and \$105,000 in 2023 to Educators Rising.

Virginia - In Virginia, the GYO program is called Teachers for Tomorrow. Virginia students are encouraged to participate in Educators Rising. The Virginia curriculum requires diversity training and uses multiple resources from the SPLC’s Teaching Tolerance program. The curriculum also utilizes other far-left teaching resources such as Reading, Writing, and Racism: Disrupting Whiteness in Teacher Education and in the Classroom.

Michigan - Proud Michigan Educator (PME) Explore is the Michigan GYO program. It also utilizes resources from SPLC’s Teaching Tolerance program. The PME curriculum dives into intersectionality and privilege— notions that aspects of your identity (race, gender, sexuality) influence your ability to succeed. There is an entire section titled “Equity, Equality, and Social Justice.”

Federally funded Grow Your Own teacher pipeline programs deserve an investigation by the U.S. Department of Education. They’ve been co-opted by activist organizations such as the SPLC, Educators Rising, and leftist teachers’ unions. A promising workforce development program has been transformed into an ideological indoctrination camp. Local school boards have control over curriculum in schools; parents should demand accountability and an investigation into these programs locally.

Access the article: <https://restoration-news.com/teacher-pipeline-programs-infiltrated-by-the-southern-poverty-law-center>

Liberty Echoes: Global Reverberations Of The Declaration Of Independence

July 20, 2026 - July 21, 2026

Victims of Communism Museum, 900 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005

Join the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation and leading educators from around the country for a two-day teacher seminar at the VOC Museum to explore how America’s founding document inspired liberty movements and liberty champions across the globe. Participating teachers will receive a travel and lodging stipend, as well as a certificate upon completion of the seminar. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until June 30th. For more information, please email Ana Leca at ana.leca@victimsofcommunism.org.

Apply: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=DKMAgy83d0Gs6gd9xrOmwHXf1cCRo8pLugJ2FLdOs6ZUMUo4RFpNWFJaVINPNE9JUVNGNkNLSUgzRi4u>

For more event information: <https://victimsofcommunism.org/event/liberty-echoes-global-reverberations-of-the-declaration-of-independence/>

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/>



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

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/>

Election Integrity

New Jersey's Election Integrity Ranking: How The State Compares To New York, The Nation And The World

By Mark Demo

A Review of the Meyers Report Election Rules Survey

In March 2026, The Meyers Report released an updated review of election rules in the United States and 36 countries around the world. The study was designed to evaluate election integrity based on election laws and procedures that the report's authors believe reduce opportunities for fraud and increase public confidence in election outcomes.

The report traces its origins to the recommendations of the 2005 Carter-Baker Commission, co-chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker. Following concerns raised after the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, the commission identified several vulnerabilities in American election administration, including absentee voting, inaccurate voter registration rolls, voting technology reliability, and voter identification requirements.

Using these factors and additional election administration criteria, the Meyers Report compared all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 36 nations across five continents.

United States Receives Lowest Score Among Countries Surveyed

One of the most striking conclusions of the report is its assessment of the current American election system. According to the Meyers Report, the United States receives a score of **59.8**, earning an **“F” grade** and ranking last among the 37 countries included in the survey.

The report notes that every U.S. state scored below several countries often not associated with election administration discussions in the United States, including Kenya, Mexico, Chile, Ghana, and Italy. Each of those countries received an “A” grade under the report’s methodology.

The report also concludes that the average score for American states falls below the average scores for both Africa and Latin America.

New Jersey and New York Rank Near the Bottom

The survey paints a particularly poor picture for New Jersey and New York under the current legal framework.

According to the report:

Jurisdiction	Current Score	Grade
New Jersey	51	F
New York	58	F
United States Avg	59.8	F

New Jersey’s score of **51** places it among the lowest-ranked states in the nation, while New York’s score of **58** also falls within the failing category.

The report classifies scores as follows: A = 90+ • B = 83–89 • C = 75–82 • D = 65–74 • F = Below 65

Under these criteria, neither New Jersey nor New York achieves a passing grade.

The report further notes that only four states currently receive passing grades of either “B” or “C,” while twenty states receive a “D” and twenty-seven states receive an “F.”

Impact of the SAVE America Act and MEGA Act

A central theme of the report is the projected impact of two proposed federal reforms: the **SAVE America Act** and the **MEGA Act**.

According to the report’s analysis, passage of these measures would significantly improve election integrity scores across all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

The report projects the following nationwide changes:

- 1 state would receive an A grade.
- 24 states would receive a B grade.
- 16 states plus the District of Columbia would receive a C grade.
- 8 states would receive a D grade.
- No state would receive an F grade.

The report argues that these reforms would substantially reduce opportunities for election fraud and strengthen public confidence in election administration.

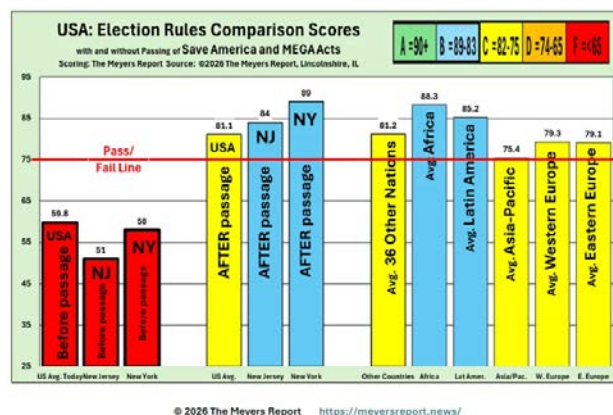
New Jersey and New York After Reform

Perhaps the most significant finding for residents of New Jersey and New York is the projected improvement in their rankings if the proposed reforms were enacted.

The report estimates the following post-reform scores:

Jurisdiction	Projected Score	Current Score	After SAVE/MEGA Acts	Grade
New Jersey	51	84		B
New York	58	89		B
United States Average	59.8	81.1		C

Under this scenario, New Jersey would move from a failing score of 51 to a score of 84, placing it solidly within the “B” range. New York would improve from 58 to 89, placing it near the top of all states evaluated.



Comparison to the Rest of the World

The report also compares projected U.S. performance with regional averages around the world.

Jurisdiction/Region	Current Score	After SAVE/MEGA Acts
United States	59.8	81.1
New Jersey	51	84
New York	58	89
Average of 36 Countries Surveyed	81.2	N/A
Average Africa	88.3	N/A
Average Latin America	85.2	N/A
Average Asia-Pacific	75.4	N/A
Average Western Europe	79.3	N/A
Average Eastern Europe	79.1	N/A

According to the Meyers Report, passage of the SAVE America Act and MEGA Act would move the United States from the lowest-ranked country in the survey to a position roughly equal to the average of the 36 countries studied.

New Jersey's projected score of 84 would exceed the averages for Asia-Pacific, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe. New York's projected score of 89 would approach the average score of African nations included in the survey.

Conclusion

The Meyers Report presents a stark assessment of the current state of election integrity in the United States. Using standards derived from concerns identified by the Carter-Baker Commission, the report concludes that both New Jersey and New York currently receive failing grades and rank near the bottom of U.S. states in election integrity.

The report's authors argue that adoption of the SAVE America Act and the MEGA Act would dramatically improve election administration nationwide. Under the report's scoring system, New Jersey would improve from an "F" to a "B," New York would improve from an "F" to a high "B," and the national average would rise from 59.8 to 81.1.

Whether one agrees with the report's methodology or policy recommendations, the study highlights the continuing national debate over voter identification, voter registration maintenance, absentee voting procedures, and election administration standards. As election reform proposals continue to be debated in Congress and state legislatures, the Meyers Report provides one perspective on how those reforms could affect the relative standing of New Jersey, New York, and the United States in comparison to election systems around the world.

To get involved locally go to www.citizens4njei.org or email info@citizens4njei.org. To get involved nationally go to www.electionintegritynetwork.org/ and sign their citizens petition by clicking here.

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.

ICYMI

Climate Realists On Offense, Radical Critics In Retreat

By Kevin Mooney originally published in Restoration News (June 10 2026)

UN jettisons worst case climate predictions as Team Trump pushes American power.

Vindication. That's what climate realists within the scientific community have found. Honest scientists have explored the natural influences driving recent warming trends, while highlighting the benefits of carbon dioxide, and exposing the faulty assumptions behind modeling exercises. Now, after years of spurious attacks, their work has paid off.



How vindicated? The sitting head of the EPA told a ballroom filled with these concerned scientists and activists their work led to the biggest deregulation effort in American history—while the progressive left lost its mind.

Realistic Climate Expectations Take the Stage

Media reaction to the Heartland Institute's 16th annual International Conference on Climate Change in Washington D.C. demonstrates the level of vindication for climate realists. So does a bombshell revelation from the United Nations. The scientists and energy policy analysts from across the country and around the globe who took part in the gathering discussed their latest research into climate trends. They also commented on a wide range of economic and regulatory topics.

EPA Chief Lee Zeldin's opening keynote address to the conference precipitated a media meltdown that has continued over the past few weeks. In his remarks, Zeldin placed a strong emphasis on the Trump administration's efforts to repeal the Obama-era endangerment finding that declared CO₂ a pollutant under the Clean Air Act. As Zeldin explained, the endangerment finding has been used to justify expensive and burdensome climate regulations since it was enacted in 2009.

If the administration is successful in its effort to repeal the finding, it will result in the largest deregulatory action in U.S. history, according to an EPA press release. The agency estimates the repeal would save U.S. taxpayers more than \$1.3 trillion. Legal challenges in support and opposed to the repeal are already working their way through the court system.

The CO₂ Coalition, a nonprofit group that co-sponsored the Heartland conference, has intervened on behalf of the administration's deregulatory initiative. In its filing, the coalition challenges the scientific underpinnings of the endangerment finding and makes the case that empirical data along with peer-reviewed studies and research contradict the finding.

Media Meltdown

Media outlets including the Washington Post, the New York Times, and The Guardian, a British daily paper, took a jaundiced view of the conference and its presentations. The Post appeared panicked over the idea that climate realists have gained traction with President Donald Trump in office. "EPA Chief Praises Group for Opposing Government Action on Climate Change," the Post bemoaned in a headline. The paper also provided the Environmental Defense Fund, a group that benefits financially from climate litigation, with a platform to criticize Heartland.

The New York Times was every bit as unhinged in its article titled: "Climate Change Denial Sees a Resurgence in Trump's Washington." The paper repeated the canard of a supposed consensus among scientists on the causes of climate change. The Old Gray Lady failed to report several of the Heartland panel discussions that the existence of a vigorous debate over the role of natural and human influences. The Center for Environmental Research and Earth Sciences (CERES), for instance, has released a study that strongly suggests the sun as the culprit. The amount of solar energy reaching the Earth's atmosphere is primarily responsible for the observed global warming that has occurred since the 1800s. CERES scientists and researchers commented on some of the key takeaways from their study during the conference.

The idea that climate change is naturally induced rather than human caused is not what outlets like The Guardian want to hear. In its coverage, the British paper insists there is a "consensus" on climate and that "global warming is real and urgent" and primarily caused by human emissions.

But the narrative from media organs hostile to Heartland has encountered a big problem since the time of the April conference. The U.N. now acknowledges that its alarmist future climate models do not square with reality. Known as RCP (Representative Concentration Pathway) 8.5, this worst-case climate change scenario has officially been jettisoned. In May, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its next generation of possible future climate change scenarios where it eliminated RCP 8.5.

"The United Nations TOP Climate Committee just admitted that its own projections (RCP8.5) were WRONG! WRONG! WRONG!," President Trump crowed on Truth Social. "For far too long Climate Activism has been used by Dumocrats to scare Americans, push horrible Energy Policies, and fund BILLIONS into their bogus research programs."

Heartland's antagonists in the media are now searching for ways to backpedal, spin, or the case of The Guardian, ignore the U.N.'s reversal.

Sterling Burnett, an editor and researcher with Heartland, dismissed the press coverage of the institute's conference. He also sees signs and indications that climate alarmists are in retreat.

"I'm less concerned with what the media is saying about us and more focused on the fact that media coverage of climate is way down," he told Restoration News in an interview. "It's the climate alarmists in and outside the media who are the fringe."

Burnett estimates that at one point the Washington Post had 16 reporters covering climate issues but, but that number has dwindled to five.

"They've laid off two-thirds of their climate reporters," he said.

The scientific data that has accumulated since Heartland first began holding its international climate conferences 16 years ago, Burnett argues, has made the alarmist position more untenable.

"We've had 16 more years of data and evidence," he said. "The science was always with us, but what's really going to

convince people is long term data, and more evidence and that's what we have now, and that's what has put climate realists on solid footing."

Gregg Goodnight, an independent retired engineer who attended the conference, called out media outlets for pursuing what he calls a "self-serving narrative." He said the preferred narrative is detached from even handed coverage.

"The climate agenda was always a cover for another real, but hidden agenda and a scam," Goodnight said. "This was always about population control and globalism. But the reality of high energy prices is biting, and the public is growing tired of the climate agenda."

There's also what Rob Bradley, the founder and CEO of the Institute for Energy Research (IER), calls "the Trump effect." The politics of climate change, he told Restoration News, have shifted dramatically, especially during Trump's second term.

"There's deregulation, and a dynamic not seen before," Bradley said. "The U.S. Gross Domestic Product is setting a global example and business leaders are finally seeing that it's okay to be economically correct, and not politically correct."

Reflecting on what the Heartland Institute has achieved since its climate conferences began 16 years ago, Joseph Bast, a former executive director and president for the organization, detects a "certain spirit of optimism" that was not present going back to 2008. "There's a willingness to cooperate that maybe we didn't have back then," Bast said. "What we are seeing now is more of reunion and I would even say a day of celebration."

James Taylor, the current Heartland president, shares these convictions and sees momentum continuing to shift in favor of climate realism.

"We are getting a scientific perspective out there that was not out there before," he said. "We are talking to scientists with real atmospheric experience and people are discerning the truth. We've seen quite a change in these past few years. It was not so long ago [President] Obama had taxpayer money funding climate alarmism."

Climate Activists Maintain Financial Advantage

Despite the progress that has been made in debunking climate alarmism, Craig Rucker, president of the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), strikes a cautionary tone. While scientists and researchers who have expressed skepticism toward alarmist theories are finding greater opportunities to express themselves, Rucker warns that the opposing side maintains a significant financial advantage.

After researching the top 10 environmental activist groups operating in the U.S. and comparing them against the top 10 free market groups on Grok, Rucker found that on an annual basis the green groups had about \$4 billion at their disposal to pursue their climate agenda versus only about \$200 million for groups pursuing free market environmental policies. Rucker told Restoration News:

Climate realists are winning the policy debate, and the science is on our side. Lee Zeldin summarized very well where we are with climate realists having been vindicated. The administration is taking seriously what we are saying and implementing many of our reforms. The failure of catastrophic predictions to materialize over time has worked to our advantage. But the climate activist movement still has lots of money and organization here in the U.S. and overseas. They are just waiting for Trump to go out of office.

Heartland operates a "ClimateRealism" website that critiques media coverage of climate issues while also calling attention to fresh scientific developments. One of its latest posts comments on the ramifications of the U.N. dropping its RCP 8.5 projections.

Meanwhile, the free-market institute is already planning ahead for another climate conference next year to be held outside of Washington D.C.

One thing we can accurately model for the future: the mainstream media coverage will certainly remain just as unhinged as always.

Access the article: <https://restoration-news.com/climate-realists-on-offense-radical-critics-in-retreat>

Stop Destroying Civilization!

OPINION by Victor Davis Hanson originally published in The Blade of Perseus (June 10 2026)

In the #MeToo years, the Left's signature slogan was "Believe All Women!"

That directive was used to bolster Christine Blasey Ford's preposterous and easily refuted 2018 allegations that some 35 years earlier she had been sexually assaulted by Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, when both were teenagers.

Two years later, the Left quietly junked that "Believe Women!" credo when Tara Reade came forward and lodged a far more credible charge that 2020 Democrat presidential nominee Joe Biden had sexually assaulted her when she was a Biden senatorial staffer.

Seven other women alleged that Biden acted toward them in sexually inappropriate ways. The Left more or less ignored these serial charges, and in Reade's case, demonized her. Suddenly, the new mantra was "Believe women only if they prove useful to the Left."

Since then, the grotesque sexual misconduct involving Democratic politicians—from New York governor Andrew Cuomo to California Congressman Eric Swalwell—has finally put #MeToo to rest. We were reminded of its demise when it was revealed that Maine senatorial candidate and socialist heartthrob Graham Platner had been discovered to possess a long social media history of crude and pornographic put-downs of women.

Indeed, an entire gaggle of former girlfriends has attested to his Nazi fascinations, his contempt for women, and his occasional physical violence against them.

So what?

Or as feminist icon and former #MeToo-er Senator Elizabeth Warren put it, speaking at a Platner campaign rally in Portland, Maine, "I'm here because Washington needs fighters, and Graham Platner is the fighter we need." But a fighter for what cause—and on whose behalf?

The demise of Black Lives Matter (BLM) offers another example of a recurring left-wing phenomenon: movements that begin as moral crusades and end as self-parodies. Almost every BLM cause célèbre has proved fraudulent, following a long tradition that stretches from Al Sharpton's Tawana Brawley myth to the Duke lacrosse scandal.

The ginned-up BLM riots that followed the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, were all based on an abject lie. Brown never said, "Hands up, don't shoot." In fact, he attacked a police officer repeatedly and was lethally shot as he charged toward the officer.

Failing actor Jussie Smollett was never attacked by white MAGA thugs in the wee hours of a cold Chicago night. Instead, the faker Smollett hired two Nigerian-Americans, decked out in MAGA hats, to stage a mock attack. Only by staging such an attack could Smollett claim victim status, attract national sympathy as a target of white hatred, and attempt to revive his fading career.

Yet, for a while, the con worked. Soon-to-be Vice President Kamala Harris, who would go on to praise the often-violent mass George Floyd demonstrations of 2020, raged that the attack by anonymous white "racists" was an "attempted modern-day lynching." Right—and she never apologized for spreading that lie.

The aftermath of the death of George Floyd did lasting damage to the country that still reverberates. Floyd was a career criminal. He had been imprisoned for participating in a home invasion where he pressed a gun into the stomach of a terrified young woman, who was beaten by one of his fellow criminals.

At the time of his arrest, Floyd was in poor condition both physically and legally—attempting to pass counterfeit currency, high on drugs, recovering from COVID, and resisting arrest.

He died after a police officer restrained him using an authorized but controversial protocol that involved placing a knee on the prostrate suspect's neck—and did not heed in time Floyd's call that he could not breathe.

What followed was the high-water mark of BLM. Four months of nightly riots led to some 35 deaths; 1,500 injured law enforcement officers; \$2 billion in property damage; 14,000 arrests; and the torching of a police precinct, a federal courthouse, and an iconic Washington, D.C., church. The current leftist habit of urban intersection takeovers, statue-toppling, name-changing, and violent demonstrations is a legacy of that summer of lawlessness.

So we still live with the toxic ripples from the aftermath and the canonization of Floyd.

Thousands of police officers nationwide were laid off in "defund the police" madness. Faddish "critical race" and "critical legal" theories led to no cash bail and the near-immediate release of hundreds of thousands of arrested violent criminals.

Our supposedly best universities, in Pavlovian fashion, dropped the SAT admission requirement and upped race-based admissions.

Racially segregated graduation ceremonies, dorms, and "safe spaces" proliferated—along with newly introduced remedial math courses at our top campuses. Indeed, professors began handing out A's to 80 percent of the student body, as Ivy League schools now inflated grades far more than did community colleges.

Administrators and bureaucrats soon created thousands of DEI positions across universities and corporations. This craze led to McCarthyite "diversity statements," an epidemic of alleged victimhood, untold billions of dollars squandered, and workplace productivity diminished. And the result was certainly not better race relations.

We were just reminded again of the absurdity of the immediate post-Floyd years, after learning that the inverse of Floyd's death had recently transpired in the United Kingdom.

Eighteen-year-old Henry Nowak, a white male student, was fatally stabbed by a Sikh immigrant with his "ceremonial" sword. In truth, the weapon was an eight-inch knife mysteriously exempted from Britain's otherwise tough laws against possession of knives.

According to reports, Vickrum Digwa called police and falsely claimed that the dying Nowak had initiated the confrontation with racial slurs, while family members attempted to conceal the weapon. (Would a Scottish highlander claim that he too had the right to carry an eight-inch broadsword as integral to his race, religion, and indigenous traditions?)

No matter—the police arrived hungry to deal with a sensational case of George Floyd-style, white-on-non-white racial violence.

Instead, they reportedly treated Digwa as the victim and handcuffed the mortally wounded and bleeding Nowak as he pleaded—nine times in total—that he could not breathe and was dying. They therefore almost certainly ensured his death. The national reaction?

No British politician went into full George Floyd take-a-knee mode—as they had in 2020, even across the Atlantic, for the felon George Floyd. The ensuing unrest, so far, seems mainly to have been limited to Southampton; there has been no mass destruction of property; there have been no mass assaults. Nowak was on the wrong side of the left-wing race-based binary of victim/victimizer and thus offered no fuel for virtue-signaling by hollow politicians. Such racial reductionism always trumps matters of class, evidence—and the truth.

As for the fate of the BLM architects? The founders never accounted for how their \$90 million in donations was actually spent, but they did disappear into their newly purchased multi-million-dollar homes and have hardly been heard from since.

The episodes of existential psychodramas that come and go—after doing enormous damage to the nation—are nearly endless.

A number of American and international agencies and “experts” have now, mostly quietly, sighed that global warming was never really the existential danger that the Left swore would put “Earth in the balance” in a mere decade.

Nonetheless, once again, the toll has been enormous. Germany wrecked its economy to seek mythical “net zero” carbon emissions—by dismantling natural gas, oil, and nuclear power plants and turning to costly, inefficient, and unreliable solar and wind power.

This green mania swept the Western world—as China built two to three coal-fired power plants a month.

The left-wing, postmodern, globalist notion of a borderless utopian world that would fuel endless “diversity” has done so much damage to Western nations that even the European Left now fears its own political suicide from the vast influxes of often hostile illegal aliens.

Millions of unlawful and unvetted entrants crashed the borders, with no desire to integrate, assimilate, or acculturate to their Western hosts. They have spiked crime, fueled anti-Semitism, and ensured unsustainable social welfare costs.

The transgender frenzy was to be the Left’s next civil rights crusade, as it constructed a new victimized class with reparatory claims against the guilty traditionalist majority.

It mattered little that gender dysphoria was an ancient phenomenon, documented even in classical literature as a rare and aberrant syndrome where physical sex was at odds with psychological sexual identification. That malady had also been well known to modern sexologists since the 19th century, who had documented it as rare, involving far less than 0.01 percent of the population.

Nevertheless, the Left invented the unnecessary Orwellian term “transphobe,” and suddenly we were off to the races with transgender biological men nude in gym showers with teen girls and transgender “women” with male musculoskeletal bodies dominating female sports.

Soon, an epidemic of teens began wondering whether they were in fact “trans” and pondering whether to undergo a battery of dangerous hormonal and chemical drug regimens—or calling themselves nonbinary, to the point where the new third sex sometimes seemed almost as numerous as the old two genders.

What accounts for these bouts of periodic, collective, and suicidal madness?

First, the craziness is almost always birthed in the contemporary, affluent, and leisured West, which alone has the capital and resources to afford such freakish sideshows.

Second, the frenzies are usually the creation of the Left, predictably birthed in universities, the media, and the bureaucracies. They appear with familiar symptoms. The irredeemable, deplorable, and “garbage” hoi polloi are supposedly too dense to be properly schooled and thus must be frightened to death in order to adopt agendas that otherwise appear to them as utterly insane.

Junk your natural-gas dryer and grill, or face massive floods on your coasts. Drop the SAT and defund the police or face endless race riots.

Hire thousands of race and gender commissars or be forever tagged as racists, sexists, homophobes, and transphobes. Open the border and let illegal aliens enter by the millions, and thus pay partial penance for “whiteness” as the nation “checks its privilege.”

The Left is correct that few Western voters will openly embrace the unpopular elite agenda of racial fixations, globalism, laxity on crime, and degrowth environmentalism.

So, their long-term solutions have four predictable aspects:

1. Open the borders to create a more diverse, impoverished, and needy constituency.
2. Create fake “working-class” pseudo-populist candidates like the pampered Graham Platner, the God-is-nonbinary “new Christian” Talarico, and, of course, the waxen effigy of “good ol’ Joe Biden from Scranton.”
3. Destroy time-tested systems by seeking to demolish the Electoral College, the 50-state union, the Senate filibuster, and the nine-justice Supreme Court.
4. Gin up these end-of-days, pseudo-existential crises whose solutions require massive new taxes, bigger government, and more dictatorial elite managers.

One good sign of growing antidotes is that increasingly Americans, and indeed all Westerners, are saying no to green harangues, no to the gender and sex demagogues, no to the race-baiting industry, no to the open-borders conglomerate, and no to ungrateful immigrants.

Their pushback might be summed up as follows: “We are no longer going to allow you to destroy ancient traditions that ensured our prosperity, security, and liberty, and which were handed down to us by generations far better than your own.”

Access the article: <https://victorhanson.com/stop-destroying-civilization/>

World Cup Fans Fall In Love With American Culture, Comfort Food Classics

1.24 million international visitors are expected in US for tournament, many exploring small-town culture

By Teresa Mull originally published in Fox News (June 13 2026)

Christopher Columbus made his name over 500 years ago, but a new crop of Europeans is discovering America during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, posting rave reviews of comfort food and rural hospitality on social media.

World Cup matches are scheduled across the country, with Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia, Seattle and the San Francisco Bay area all hosting matches.

Oxford Economics reported that 1.24 million international visitors are expected to visit America for the World Cup.

The company added that it expects the tournament will “spark a powerful rebound in international travel — revitalizing demand, filling hotels and showcasing the broad economic reach of mega-events.”

It’s also sparking admiration in some tourists for American culture.

X user @FreddyLA7, from Germany, has more than 500,000 followers and has been posting enthusiastically about his experience exploring the South. He began his road trip nearly a week ago, according to his posts. He raved about how green Georgia is, writing, “it’s crazy,” and posted a picture of a Taco Bell and a pile of food, declaring the fast-food chain “The holy land.”

Freddy took in some “Stranger Things” filming locations and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Park and raved about his experience at Walmart.

“Just had our first Waffle House experience at 1 a.m.,” he posted, along with photos of several plates of food. “Great food, great prices and friendly staff. 10/10, we will be coming back.”

Freddy enjoyed a mountain of food that he called “Wendy’s escalation!” and joked about the number of soft drink choices he said were “overwhelming.”

He captioned a photo of a Buc-ee’s, writing, “DUDE LMAO THIS IS A GAS STATION,” as well as a photo of the dinner he procured from the travel center at 1 a.m. He also featured Chili’s, Freddy’s Frozen Custard & Steakhburgers, Chipotle, Buffalo Wild Wings and Waffle House (again) in his posts.

“The best discovery of our road trip has been a musician called Ella Langley,” he wrote on a post showing his vehicle’s music system. “We had never heard of her before, but after hearing her on pretty much every country radio station, we’ve become big fans. She’s basically the soundtrack of our trip.”



Buc-ee’s mega travel centers, common in the South, have captured the hearts of foreign tourists in the United States for the FIFA World Cup. (The Washington Post/Getty Images)

Freddy called Bass Pro Shop's Outdoor World "another surreal place." He posted a photo of a selection of rifles in the store. "I know some people will say I'm too positive about everything I see," he wrote, "but this place was crazy. They had a shooting range in the store."

In another post, he wrote, "I love Americans. We were about to walk an hour to the stadium in the rain to save on an Uber, and the receptionist at the hotel we were parked in front of decided to drive us there."

An X post by user @washghost1 showing a little Norwegian boy ordering at In-N-Out and then delighting in his burger has garnered nearly 900,000 views.

@SkylarSkye3 posted a photo of food from luxury grocery store chain Erewhon.

"I can't lie... the food in America is ridiculous," she wrote. "Everyone talks about portion sizes, but nobody talks enough about how GOOD everything tastes. Even the 'quick' food feels elite compared to what I'm used to in the U.K."

X user @japan_nobunaga wrote a lengthy post about his experience at an American breakfast counter (though it's unclear if he's in the U.S. for the World Cup or simply to tour the country). The waitress had recommended the biscuits and gravy.

"When the plate arrived, I thought something had gone wrong in the kitchen," he wrote. "I say this with shame. The dish looked like a construction site after rain. Pale mounds. Gray ladle-fall. Speckles I could not identify. In my land, the eye eats first. A meal is arranged like a garden. This meal was arranged like weather."

He said he changed his mind after tasting the Southern staple.

"I must now formally apologize to the biscuits, the gravy, the waitress, the kitchen and the entire breakfast tradition of the American South," he wrote.

"It was magnificent. Warm. Peppered. The biscuit drank the gravy the way a field drinks rain — THAT is why it is shaped like that, you fool — and every mound I had insulted was a soft fold of comfort that my homeland, in 800 years, never once thought to invent."

The same user also humorously documented his experience with brain freeze after drinking a gas station slushy too quickly and the wonders of coleslaw at a BBQ meal.

"One thing I love about the European World Cup tourists right now is that they're not just being dropped off in the middle of Los Angeles or New York City or some overhyped metropolitan hub that most Americans like myself don't even like," X user @realmikolson observed.

"They're being dropped right in the middle of the heart of middle America."

"A wise man once said, 'If you want to hate America, watch the news. If you want to love America, drive across it,'" Olson wrote on the post accompanying the video clip.

Olson said international tourists driving nine hours across Texas and experiencing Auburn University fraternity houses are witnessing "overwhelming American kindness."

"A lot of the locals in these areas have no idea who these people are or why they're even there," he said, adding that there's been very little World Cup news or marketing, particularly in small towns.

Nevertheless, he's heard of instances of restaurant owners driving World Cup fans to games because they can't find an Uber. A deli owner gave British tourists free lunch "just because they came all this way," he said.

Some Alabama firefighters reportedly gave foreign visitors a tour of their fire department and free merchandise.

Olson said that the hospitality that's "shocking" tourists is a direct result of people "living by American values and principles."

Access the article: <https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/world-cup-fans-fall-love-american-culture-comfort-food-classics.amp>

America 250: Presidential Message On The Anniversary Of The Signing Of Magna Carta

By The White House originally published in The White House (June 15 2026)

Today, we celebrate the anniversary of the adoption of Magna Carta—one of history's earliest and most consequential declarations of human freedom. Forged over 500 years before the dawn of our Republic, its eternal principles of equal justice, liberty, and the rule of law would ultimately leave an indelible mark on the American way of life.

On June 15, 1215, King John of England affixed his royal seal to Magna Carta at Runnymede, establishing the cornerstone of liberty upon which many of the world's free governments would one day be built. For one of the first times in history, fundamental liberties of mankind were written into the law of the land: that justice must be equal and impartial, that religious liberty must be protected by law, that government may not levy taxes upon its people without their consent, and that no free man may be unduly imprisoned or stripped of his rights except by the lawful judgement of his peers. It boldly proclaimed that even the mightiest among us are answerable to a higher law and that the rights of free citizens are beyond the reach of any crown or government.

What was born on the fields of Runnymede would find its truest expression centuries later in the halls of Philadelphia, where our Founding Fathers gathered to forge a new Nation from the same eternal principles. They carried with them the ancient English love of liberty; a distinctive sense of glory, destiny, and pride; and a culture and character shaped over centuries on both sides of the Atlantic—but they had watched a British crown grow deaf to the very charter it had sworn to uphold. Having endured that tyranny for too long, our forefathers consecrated themselves to a new Republic grounded in the consent of the governed, equal justice under the law, and the God-given rights of every free citizen to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—a country that would stand as living proof that the timeless ideals of the Great Charter could still sustain a free and sovereign people across the ages.

As we commemorate the anniversary of Magna Carta, we are reminded that the duty to preserve these freedoms falls to every generation of free citizens. The Patriots who pledged their lives to Independence in 1776 were heirs to the liberties enshrined in the Great Charter, and for 250 years since, America has borne witness to the truth that those ideals can endure—that a nation built on impartial justice, individual liberty, and the rule of law can rise to meet any challenge and remain forever free. In this incredible milestone year for our Nation, we are the proud heirs of that great legacy—and we resolve to carry it forward with the same conviction that has defined every generation of Americans who came before us.

Access the Presidential Message: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2026/06/america-250-presidential-message-on-the-anniversary-of-the-signing-of-magna-carta/>

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 July 20, 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 Meeting

Monday July 13, 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 July 14, 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 -- July 2026

Tuesday July 14, 2026 6:00 PM Agenda Meeting

Thursday July 16, 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

Young Washington (2026)



In Theaters July 3

PG-13, Genre: War, Action

Release Date: July 3 2026

Directors: Jon Erwin, Daniel Edwards

Duration: 2h 5mins

Cast: William Franklyn-Miller, Ben Kingsley, Andy Serkis, Kelsey Grammer, Joel Smallbone, Mary-Louise Parker

Film Synopsis: Before he was the Father of a Nation, he was a soldier fighting to survive. A single misstep thrusts young George Washington into the center of a global conflict, testing his honor, loyalty, and courage. As alliances crumble and the frontier erupts into war, he must confront not only his enemies but the man he's becoming. This is the untold story of Young Washington.

Watch Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Q3WkycWjLc

More about Young Washington: <https://www.angel.com/movies/young-washington>

Tickets on Sale Now: Angel Studios, Fandango

'Young Washington' – A Patriotic, Powerful American Biopic

Hollywood ignored our 250th birthday, not Angel Studios and Wonder Project

By Christian Toto originally published in Hollywood in Toto (HiT) (June 23 2026)

Mention the name George Washington and a stark, consistent image comes to mind.

Old. Regal. Consequential.

Fatherly.

The nation's first president was all of those things, but how did he get to that vital place in history? What was he like as a younger man, someone who didn't have all the answers but knew the society he wanted to flourish in the colonies?

"Young Washington" fills in the blanks, and then some. This rousing biopic, brimming with smart dialogue and kinetic action sequences, is the film we need right now.

Happy Birthday, America!

An impressive William Franklyn-Miller stars as George Washington, a man with immense ambition but few family connections. He dreams of rising up the ranks in the British military and proving his mettle, and he understands he'll have to face immense danger to do so.

His arrogance is nearly as large as his professional appetites.

He convinces a curious Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie (Ben Kingsley, as solid as ever) to make him a "Major," and send him on a mission to stop the French from usurping the King's territory. It's a foolhardy quest, one seemingly doomed to fail.

That won't stop George, nor will his lack of experience and unchecked hubris. He soon learns the realities of life, war and death, and along the way, the germ of greatness starts to grow.

"Young Washington" leans on familiar faces to flesh out the cast – Kelsey Grammer, Mary Louise-Parker, Andy Serkis and Kingsley – but the rest of the ensemble more than holds its own.

That's especially true of the film's lead performer.

Franklyn-Miller is stellar from start to finish, willing to show George's flaws as well as his historic potential. We know the latter through high school history class, but it's the journey that makes the story so engaging.

A sweet subplot finds George attempting to woo a socialite (Mia Rodgers), eager to prove he's worthy of her love. Not so fast. The era's culture didn't look kindly on someone like George shmoozing above his station.

That courtship, and inevitable heartbreak, is one of the film's many pleasures.

"Young Washington" could have stitched together historical clichés to show the title character's growth. Some lines of dialogue land a little too hard, but screenwriters Jon Erwin, Tom Provost and Diederik Hoogstraten otherwise defy expectations and deliver something profound.

Their lines evoke the birth of a noble experiment, the vision George had for himself first, and later the colonies. At times, the lines are flat-out beautiful, propelling the story forward without feeling like a Sunday school sermon.

"Young Washington" is also a war movie.

The story brims with battle sequences, the kind you expect from a large-scale movie house. Angel Studios may be young, but its creative growth is nothing less than stunning. Credit Jon Erwin ("Jesus Revolution") for finding the right approach in scene after scene.

The hand-to-hand combat, as well as the more traditional gun battles, pop with clarity and vigor. There's nothing to indicate a diminished budget or second-tier experience.

This is the vision of a young George Washington the legend deserved.

The smaller sequences connect just as well as the epic-sized moments. Think George's mother (Louise-Parker) gently steering her son toward a better path after a series of considerable missteps. It's a short, gentle sequence, but it lingers for the rest of the film.

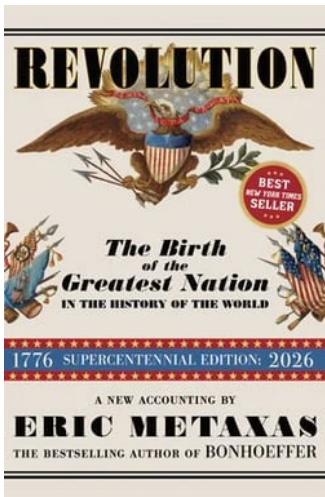
Or a humane Grammer, embodying the period's aristocracy, looking past George's modest station to see something special.

"Young Washington" would be a welcome arrival at any time or date. Debuting on the nation's 250th birthday is almost too perfect, even for the movies.

HiT or Miss: "Young Washington" is every bit the biopic the nation's Father deserves, representing the best film yet from Angel Studios and Wonder Project.

Access the review: <https://www.hollywoodintoto.com/young-washington-review-angel-studios/>

Book: Revolution: The Birth Of The Greatest Nation In The History Of The World



Author: Eric Metaxas
Publisher: Odysseus Books
Publication Date: June 2 2026
Hardcover, 640 Pages

Overview

#1 PUBLISHERS WEEKLY BESTSELLER
#2 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
#1 AMAZON BESTSELLER
#1 BOOKSCAN WEEKLY BESTSELLER
#1 BALTIMORE SUN BESTSELLER

"Once upon a time there was a REVOLUTION."

There's never been a nation like the United States of America. It's impossible to imagine the world without it—but do you know the wild and true story of how it came into existence?

On our 250th anniversary, the hunger for America's story has never been greater.

Who better to tell it than historian Eric Metaxas, author of seven New York Times bestsellers, including the ground-breaking, million-selling biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer?

With the passion, erudition, and irrepressible wit that have become his signature, Metaxas's REVOLUTION brings the epic of America's birth to life so fully that you will feel you are a part of the story, which is precisely the point. By turns deeply moving, gripping, and spectacularly entertaining, these are the stories every American must know, including some of history's noblest heroes — and some despicable villains.

REVOLUTION also touches on the role that sacrifice, character, and faith played in the great struggle for "the Sacred Cause" of liberty. George Washington, John Adams, Nathan Hale, Henry Knox, Horatio Gates, Israel Putnam, Benedict Arnold and many others all come to life for a new generation of Americans.

At more than 600 pages—with photos, maps, and illustrations—REVOLUTION is definitive and sweeping, an astonishing epic containing a dazzling array of stories, ranging from the explosive events that led up to Lexington and Concord, all the way through the impossible twists and turns of the war itself—including the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Crossing of the Delaware,

Saratoga, and the bitter winter at Valley Forge — all the way to the final victory in Yorktown and “The World Turned Upside Down.”

Unless we ourselves know the true story of the Revolution—what some have called America’s “founding myth”—we cannot play the role we are meant to play in the Revolution that still continues today.

This is our story. We need to know it. For such a time as this.

To purchase: Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million

Who is Eric Metaxas?: <https://ericmetaxas.com/about/>

God And Man At The Revolution

Metaxas reminds readers that faith was not an accessory to the American Revolution — it was one of its engines.

By Francis P. Sempa originally published in The American Spectator (June 26 2026)

If you read one book about the American Revolution during the celebrations of our country’s 250th birthday, make it Eric Metaxas’s *Revolution: The Birth of the Greatest Nation in the History of the World*. In it, Metaxas recounts “the glorious events of [the nation’s] conception,” in a fast-paced, insightful, and original assessment of what he accurately describes as a “world-changing event.” And the brilliant and courageous men who brought about that revolution frequently looked to a providential Christian God for comfort, solace, inspiration, protection, and victory. For most of our Founders, liberty and faith were two sides of the same coin — God and man made this revolution.

Metaxas shows that the American Revolution had its ideologues and its practical leaders. John Adams, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine were the brightest ideologues who shone a light on British tyranny and fed the flames of liberty, while George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Henry Knox, and Benjamin Franklin, among others, waged war and diplomacy to make liberty and independence a reality.

Yet, Metaxas also shows that the American Revolution was a close-run thing. The upstart colonials were taking on the world’s most powerful empire, and that empire had many loyalists in the colonies who opposed independence. General Washington waged war with an undisciplined and untested army against British regulars and a navy that ruled the seas. The odds favored Great Britain, but the revolutionary generation in America followed the inspiring words of Patrick Henry: “Give me liberty or give me death.”

The colonists began this glorious crusade wanting only to enjoy the rights of British citizens, but two principal factors caused them to rebel: a stubborn, arrogant, and inflexible British elite and a long tradition of being left alone by the mother country to govern themselves, which made the colonists recoil from the king’s and parliament’s attempts to exercise greater control over their lives. Metaxas goes over familiar ground, highlighting England’s taxes on stamps, tea, and other goods; the dispatch and quartering of British troops; the denigration of the colonists’ Christian faith by British soldiers and some of their leaders; the Boston Massacre; and the so-called “Intolerable Acts.” King George III thought that such measures would crush the Massachusetts rebels, but Metaxas notes they had the opposite effect — the other colonies came to Massachusetts’ defense.

England’s repression resulted in the convening of the First Continental Congress at Carpenter’s Hall in Philadelphia. The Congress opened with a prayer. “Something extraordinary was afoot,” Metaxas writes. There was a “Christian atmosphere [in] Congress — and the frank belief among most of its members that their fate lay in God’s hands.” Metaxas quotes letters and speeches among the founding generation that invoke God or Providence or the Creator. Patrick Henry implored the Virginia House of Burgesses that “an appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us.” John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail that millions of colonists “will be on their knees ... before their Creator imploring ... His smiles on American councils and arms.” Christian preachers joined and sometimes led the chorus for liberty and independence.

England’s response was to send more troops to America, which led to the war’s beginning at Lexington Green and Concord Bridge on April 19, 1775. Metaxas writes: “If there was a clear bright line at which the Revolution we call the American Revolution began, the events at that bridge on that day were it.” It was the beginning of the evolution of a Continental Army — an army of volunteers that would seize Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point, fight the British in Boston at places called Bunker Hill and Breed’s Hill, unsuccessfully attempt to seize Quebec, suffer defeats in Brooklyn and Manhattan, retreat to New Jersey and Pennsylvania, famously cross the Delaware and rout Hessian forces at Trenton, defeat the British at Princeton, surprise the world by its victory at Saratoga, suffer through cold and hunger at Valley Forge, move south and with the help of the French Navy win the war at Yorktown.

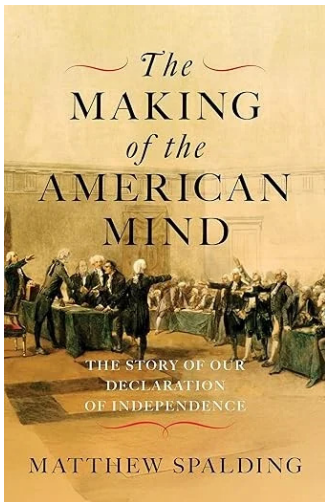
Then there is the political side of the Revolution, with John Adams leading the way in Philadelphia, with help from Virginian Richard Henry Lee, and the compromise over slavery to win over the southern colonies for independence. The move toward independence was also aided by the sheer cruelty and brutality of British troops. Metaxas notes that by July 2, 1776, independence carried the day in Congress, and Jefferson’s Declaration, which claimed that “all men” had “unalienable rights” that came from their Creator, and was read outside Carpenter’s Hall on July 4th, wasn’t actually signed by all delegates until August 2nd.

If John Adams was the political hero of the Revolution, the overall hero was Washington. The “indispensable man” of the Revolution made sure by his words and his actions that the Revolution for liberty would not be in vain. At New Windsor, New York, Washington broke up a planned coup by army officers who had not been paid by Congress, reminding them all that he had grown not only gray but nearly blind in service to his country. Then, at a dinner with his officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York City, he bid them farewell and traveled to Annapolis to resign his commission. In America, Washington demonstrated that the triumphant general in war doesn’t cling to power in peacetime. When King George heard about this, he called Washington “the greatest character of the age.”

Metaxas closes this great book with the observation that the American Revolution, unlike so many other revolutions, succeeded because the founding generation of Americans lived in a culture of religious faith and virtue, even when they fell short of living up to that culture’s ideals. It is a culture, Metaxas notes, that is often scorned by today’s American elite class, which has become so secularized and anti-religious. Let us hope that when celebrating our country’s 250th birthday, we are mindful of the religious roots of our liberty.

Access the article: <https://spectator.org/god-and-man-at-the-revolution/>

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 5: The Declaration of Independence

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 5 (10mins 50secs): The American Founders made a pledge to each other in 1776. What did they promise, and why? Larry Arnn explains the structure and meaning of the Declaration of Independence. Watch this Story of America video with Hillsdale College President Larry Arnn.

Access the video (10mins 50secs): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0L3lb1Aav6I>

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

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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

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.



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



Photo courtesy of Contributor of our very own John Hart signing a copy of the Declaration of Independence at Hopewell Borough Block Party USA 250th TOWN-WIDE CELEBRATION June 6 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/>

Presidential Message On U.S. Catholic Bishops Honoring The 250th Anniversary Of American Independence

By The White House originally published in The White House (June 11 2026)

Today, Melania and I join in prayer with Catholic Bishops gathered in Orlando, Florida, as they consecrate the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the occasion of our 250th year of American Independence—a powerful moment in our national story and a poignant reminder that America has always been guided by the loving hand of God.

Even in the centuries before the United States was conceived in nationhood, America was a land of prayer, a place of miracles, and home to some of the most faithful and devoted Christians to ever live. From the heroic bands of Christian missionaries, settlers, and explorers who tamed the unknown to spread the Gospel to the priests, chaplains, and churchgoers who forged our spirit in every generation since, the love of Jesus Christ has stood at the center of our identity and way of life.

Inspired by this proud birthright of faith, just years after the end of the Revolutionary War, Bishop John Carroll—the first Catholic bishop in the United States and cousin of Catholic Founding Father Charles Carroll—consecrated our young Republic to Mary, the Mother of God. Today, this grand legacy of faith in America reaches yet another historic milestone as America's Catholic Bishops consecrate our Nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, during which they will prayerfully "celebrate the abundant gifts" that God has "given this nation, founded on the self-evident truths that our Creator has endowed all people with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And following today's consecration, on June 12, Christians in the United States and around the world will celebrate the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, a joyful celebration of God's boundless love for all His creation.

This year's Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus also fittingly marks the anniversary of one of the most momentous days in Western civilization's long twilight struggle against atheistic communism. On June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan delivered his historic address at Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, in which he famously implored Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to "tear down this wall."

Toward the end of his remarks, President Reagan identified what he called "the most fundamental distinction of all between East and West: The totalitarian world produces backwardness because it does such violence to the spirit, thwarting the human impulse to create, to enjoy, to worship."

President Reagan recounted the construction by the communist East German government of a mighty television tower in the 1960s. "Virtually ever since," Reagan said, "the authorities have been working to correct what they view as the tower's one major flaw, treating the glass sphere at the top with paints and chemicals of every kind. Yet even today when the sun strikes that sphere, that sphere that towers over all Berlin, the light makes the sign of the cross. There in Berlin, like the city itself, symbols of love, symbols of worship, cannot be suppressed."

On that very day, just over 200 miles away, Pope Saint John Paul II, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, was speaking in his native Poland. On the Westerplatte peninsula, the place where, in an extraordinary display of heroic virtue, an isolated force of around 200 Polish warriors held out for 7 days against approximately 4,000 German troops attacking from sea, land, and air in the opening days of World War II, the Pope challenged a gathering of Polish youth: "Each of you, young friends, also finds your own 'Westerplatte' in life. A set of tasks that must be undertaken and fulfilled. A just cause that you cannot simply fail to fight for. A duty, an obligation, from which you cannot shirk. You cannot 'desert.' Finally—a certain order of truths and values that must be 'upheld' and 'defended,' just as at Westerplatte, within oneself and around oneself. Yes, defended—for oneself and for others."

Pope Saint John Paul II closed by quoting the words of a Polish martyr. "More horrifying than a defeat of arms is the defeat of the human spirit."

Thanks to the moral leadership of President Reagan and Pope Saint John Paul II, the tireless work and determination of free men and women around the world, and the moral witness of millions who endured prolonged suffering within the Captive Nations, the godless forces of Soviet communism were vanquished—and the human spirit triumphed.

Today, nearly four decades later, our Nation and our culture confront a new set of menacing ideologies seeking once again to cast God out from our society. But today, as Catholic Bishops consecrate the United States of America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in this 250th year of our Independence, we recommit ourselves, like President Reagan and Pope Saint John Paul II, to defending our spiritual identity and great civilizational inheritance. Above all, we pray that America will continue for the next 250 years, and beyond, to be a land of faith, a country of miracles, and a light and glory to all nations.

Access the Presidential Message: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2026/06/presidential-message-on-u-s-catholic-bishops-honoring-the-250th-anniversary-of-american-independence/>

How To Think About The American Revolution

By Christopher Flannery originally published in Imprimis (June/July 2026 | Volume 55, Issue 6/7)

* SPECIAL SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL ISSUE *

How should we think about the American Revolution on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence? The American revolutionaries can help us answer this question.

John Adams, one of the chief revolutionaries, looking back more than four decades after the Declaration of Independence, recorded a memorable judgment on the Revolution in which he played such a central part. Adams lived through all the great events of the Revolution beginning well before and continuing long after July 4, 1776: the Boston Tea Party, the convening of the First Continental Congress, Paul Revere's Ride, the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Washington's crossing of the Delaware, the winter at Valley Forge, and the Battle of Yorktown. He understood that all the colorful circumstances, the risky and fateful choices, the acts of daring and heroism would be long remembered and would deserve and need serious study.

But Adams also thought that we couldn't understand the heroic deeds of the American Revolution—we couldn't recognize their most essential lesson for us—without understanding the reason they were undertaken. As he wrote to Hezekiah Niles on February 13, 1818, the American Revolution took place "in the Minds and Hearts of the People"—a "radical Change in the Principles, Opinions Sentiments and Affection of the People," he wrote, "was the real American Revolution."

The record of this revolution in Americans' hearts and minds is one of our great national treasures. It provides precious knowledge of the American Revolution to all future times and all peoples everywhere, but especially to what America's Founders called "ourselves and our Posterity." It is the eloquent record of the conception and articulation of the American idea of political freedom in pamphlets, petitions, state papers, letters, sermons, constitutions, resolves, bills and declarations of rights, memoirs, diaries, journals, treaties, and speeches—mostly in a compressed period in the 1760s and 1770s—in which a revolutionary generation learned to think and act like the Americans they were becoming.

This "real American Revolution," as Adams called it, culminated in the Declaration of Independence—an expression of what Thomas Jefferson called "the American Mind." All of the revolutionary actions and documents leading to the Declaration express one dimension or another of the American idea of political freedom. Returning to them again and again is a way by which succeeding generations of Americans can continue to experience the American Revolution for themselves.

This experience should not be seen as merely historical. To experience the real American Revolution, and not just the record of it, is to experience the idea of political freedom becoming active in our hearts, minds, and lives. It is to experience being free—not as an unhinged Supreme Court Justice explained freedom in 1992, writing that freedom means being able to "define

[our] own concept of existence," but in the active exercise of the capacities required for self-government. It is an experience that requires, as the Virginia Declaration of Rights proclaimed in 1776, "a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue, and [a] frequent recurrence to fundamental principles."

The revolutionary and founding generations did their heroic part in bequeathing to us this legacy of freedom. So abundant is this gift that to live up to it is the most fulfilling thing we can do. It is to confirm with our lives what George Washington declared in his First Inaugural Address, "that there exists in the economy and course of nature, an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness." The daily activity of a free people is the "pursuit of Happiness," the activity of being good sons and daughters, good parents, neighbors, secretaries, teachers, artists, farmers, plumbers, mechanics, business owners, and citizens. As Benjamin Franklin's homely Poor Richard put it: "Pitch upon that course of life which is most excellent, and Custom will make it the most delightful."

In this daily American "rising to equality," as Abraham Lincoln described it, the idea of political freedom so richly articulated by the American revolutionaries informs and elevates our lives, our communities, our institutions, and all we do and aspire to do. Those who undertook the American Revolution intended for it to honor human nature. Nothing can do more honor to human nature or greater good to ourselves, our country, and our world than living up to that Revolution.

Ark of Our Covenant

John Adams left a legacy of freedom not only with his life but in his death. In 1826, at the age of 90, as one of the surviving signers of the Declaration of Independence and a former president, he received an invitation from the mayor of Washington, D.C., to attend a celebration of the 50th anniversary of American independence. He declined the invitation for reasons of ill health. But on June 30, 1826—four days before that anniversary—he received in his home in Quincy, Massachusetts, the Reverend George Whitney and representatives of Quincy's July 4th celebration committee. They asked the great statesman for a toast to be presented in his name on the Fourth of July. Adams proposed, "I will give you, 'Independence Forever!'" They asked if he would like to add anything, and he replied, "Not a word."

It was Adams' last public act. He died on July 4, 1826, fifty years to the day after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress.

Thomas Jefferson received the same invitation Adams received to celebrate the 50th anniversary of American independence. The last letter in Jefferson's handwriting of which we have any record is his response to that invitation, dated June 24, 1826. Like Adams, Jefferson was too ill to attend. And like Adams, he would die—as if American destiny had decreed it—on the day for which the celebration was scheduled.

In his response, sent from Monticello, Jefferson reflected on the meaning of the Declaration, of which he was the famous author, and he showed that his revolutionary spirit had not dimmed. "May it be to the world," he wrote, what I believe it will be, (to some parts sooner, to others later, but finally to all), the Signal of arousing men to burst the chains under which monkish ignorance and superstition had persuaded them to bind themselves, and to assume the blessings and security of self government. . . . All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few bootied and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God. These are grounds of hope for others. For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights and an undiminished devotion to them.

Jefferson had intended to write a memorable letter, and he succeeded. It was widely reprinted just days after he sent it and continues to convey the spirit and meaning of the Revolution 200 years later.

John Quincy Adams was President of the United States when he learned that his father and Jefferson had both died on that Fourth of July. He wrote in his diary what many others were thinking and saying, that this was a manifestation of "Divine favor." Daniel Webster, who was invited to deliver a eulogy in Faneuil Hall in Boston the following month, called the passing of Jefferson and Adams on that day a "dispensation of the Divine Providence." "Adams and Jefferson are no more," he intoned, but "their work doth not perish with them." "No age will come," said Webster, "in which the American Revolution will appear less than it is, one of the greatest events in human history."

In John Quincy Adams' and Daniel Webster's eyes, the highest attainment of all future generations of Americans would be to understand and live up to the greatness of the American Revolution. The essence of that greatness was not the heroic deeds, of which there were many, in the War for Independence. It was the idea of independence itself—the idea of political freedom expressed most memorably in the document whose 250th anniversary we are celebrating.

Fifty years ago, when Americans were celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Declaration, Harry V. Jaffa wrote in his book, *How to Think About the American Revolution*, "Nothing threatens the future of human freedom more than the failure to keep alive the understanding of, and attachment to, its principles."

John Quincy Adams made the same point beautifully in one of his many great speeches. "Fellow citizens," he said, after telling the biblical story of the children of Israel's entry into the promised land, "the ark of your covenant is the Declaration of Independence." All of their blessings, he went on to say, would come from adherence to the Declaration's principles, and all of their curses would come from departure from those principles. He concluded:

Lay up these principles, then, in your hearts, and in your souls—bind them for signs upon your hands, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes—teach them to your children, speaking of them when sitting in your houses, when walking by the way, when lying down and when rising up—write them upon the doorplates of your houses, and upon your gates—cling to them as to the issues of life—adhere to them as to the cords of your eternal salvation. So may your children's children at the next return of this day of jubilee, after a full century of experience under your national Constitution, celebrate it again in the full enjoyment of all the blessings recognised by you in the commemoration of this day, and of all the blessings promised to the children of Israel upon Mount Gerizim, as the reward of obedience to the law of God.

The Great Seal

On July 4, 1776, the very day the Continental Congress declared that the American people were going “to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them,” it appointed a committee to design and propose a “seal for the United States of America.” This seal was to be the official expression of the sovereign authority Americans were fighting for in the War for Independence. To show how serious Congress was about the matter, it put Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams on the committee, which submitted recommendations a month later.

The long, hard war delayed action on this matter. Four years went by before a second committee was formed, which made its own recommendations. Two years after that, while peace talks were underway in Paris, a third committee was formed. At that point the need for a seal was more pressing, because an independent United States would want an official symbol of its newly won sovereignty and an official seal for any peace treaty to be signed.

Charles Thomson, Secretary of the United States Congress and a founding father of whom most of us haven't heard, was asked to take the recommendations of the three committees into account and submit a proposal for a Great Seal. To begin to understand his work, one need only look at the back of an American one dollar bill, on which the right side depicts the front and the left side depicts the back of the Great Seal of the United States.

Heraldry is the discipline of designing coats of arms, armorial bearings, and such things, and the Great Seal of the United States is a product of the art of heraldry along with the art of the statesman. In designing it, the arts of the Old World were used to create a coat of arms that would be the official expression of sovereign authority of a nation that understood itself to be inaugurating a new order of the ages.

Thomson submitted to Congress what heraldists call a “blazon” accompanied by “remarks and explanation” on June 20, 1782. It was approved that same day. A blazon is a written description in heraldic terms describing the appearance of the proposed seal. No sketch or illustration accompanied it. Thomson's words alone, which are part of the law officially approving the Seal, are the final authority for what the Great Seal of the United States is and what it means. Reading the blazon along with Thomson's remarks and explanation, while studying the back of our dollar bill, can teach us important things about the meaning of the Revolution we have inherited and are meant to pass on to our posterity.

On the front of the Great Seal we behold an American bald eagle bearing on its breast a shield with 13 vertical stripes; clutching in its left talon 13 arrows and in its right talon an olive branch; the eagle's head is turned right toward the olive branch; a scroll held in the eagle's beak bears the familiar motto in Latin, *E Pluribus Unum*; and a “crest” above the eagle's head contains 13 stars from which a “glory” emanates, breaking through a cloud. This is our nation's official coat of arms.

All the thirteens represent, of course, the 13 original American states. The Latin motto, *E Pluribus Unum*—out of many, one—expresses the joining of those states into one nation. In his explanation, Thomson tells us that the shield is “born on the breast of an American Eagle without any other supporters to denote that the United States of America ought to rely on their own Virtue. . . . The Olive branch and arrows denote the power of peace & war which is exclusively vested in Congress.” In heraldry, the right side is always superior to the left side, and the eagle's head is turned to the olive branch, the symbol of peace, rather than to the arrows, because we fight wars for the sake of peace.

On the reverse side of the Great Seal we see, in Thomson's words, “A Pyramid unfinished. In the Zenith an Eye in a triangle surrounded with a glory proper. Over the Eye these words ‘Annuit Coeptis’ [which means ‘He approves of what has been started’]. On the base of the pyramid, the numerical letters MDCCLXXVI [1776] & underneath the following motto, ‘Novus Ordo Seclorum’ [which means ‘New Order of the Ages’].”

Thomson explains: “The pyramid signifies Strength and Duration: The Eye over it & the Motto allude to the many signal interpositions of providence in favour of the American cause. The date underneath is that of the Declaration of Independence and the words under it signify the beginning of the new American Era, which commences from that date.”

We still live in that new American Era. Like the unfinished pyramid under the eye of God, the earthly work of American freedom, aspiring to be worthy of divine approval, is always unfinished. We have, since 1776, experienced many more “signal interpositions of providence in favour of the American cause.” So long as we continue in good conscience to appeal, as we did in our beginning, “to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions,” we may “with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence,” like Americans of all preceding generations, with good heart “pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor” in this greatest of earthly causes.

Access the article: <https://imprimis.hillsdale.edu/how-to-think-about-the-american-revolution/>

Steve Gruber & The Freedom Project - One Nation (Official Music Video)

Enjoy this new music video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rHJol3Ge6U>



The Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America
and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation
under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Source: <https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/celebrate/pledge.pdf>

"I will give you, 'Independence Forever!'"

- John Adams June 30, 1826

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