

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM UNACCOUNTABLE POWER

*A Civic Instrument Affirming Non-Violence, Constitutional Fidelity, and Democratic
Accountability*

Independence Day — July 4, 2026

United States of America

To the reader, and to all who judge power by conscience, consent, and dignity:

We affirm a minimum civic standard: that power over human lives is legitimate only when exercised transparently, accountably, non-violently, and with the informed and ongoing consent of the people affected.

Issued in civic conscience and nonviolence

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TO THE READER

This document is a civic statement of principle. It affirms a minimum standard by which power deserves trust: that power over human lives is legitimate only when exercised transparently, accountably, non-violently, and with the informed and ongoing consent of the people affected. It is written to be usable across differences. People may disagree deeply about policies, leaders, and solutions, and still share the belief that power must remain answerable to human dignity, constitutional order, and the future. This declaration is not a claim of authority over others. It does not govern. It does not authorize coercion, violence, or unlawful action. It is offered as an act of conscience and a point of civic orientation. It does not ask the reader to adopt a party, ideology, movement, or program. It asks only that the standards we apply to others be applied to all power without exception—public and private, local and national, political and economic, technological and institutional.

- As a statement to reflect upon
- As a benchmark for evaluating power and institutional conduct
- As language for civic discussion across disagreement
- As a personal affirmation of non-violence, constitutional fidelity, and democratic accountability

Those who choose to endorse it do so as an act of conscience, not affiliation. Endorsement affirms the civic standard, not unanimity of opinion, and does not confer authority or obligation. The goal of this document is not to inflame conflict, but to strengthen civic dignity: to make it easier to tell the truth, to refuse dehumanization, to insist upon accountability, and to rebuild trust where it has been eroded. Proceed slowly. Read with care. Keep what is true. Discard what is not. Judge by principle.

STATEMENT OF CIVIC LINEAGE AND CONTINUITY

This declaration stands in a long tradition of moral and civic assertions that hold power accountable to human dignity, consent, and responsibility. It does not claim authority from these traditions, but alignment with their shared insistence that power remains answerable to the people it affects. It draws upon, and extends, principles articulated across diverse civic, human rights, and conscience-based traditions, including:

- The Declaration of Independence (1776), affirming inherent rights and the legitimacy of withdrawing consent from destructive power
- The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), asserting equality before the law
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), recognizing inherent human dignity as universal
- Traditions of nonviolent resistance and civil conscience articulated by Henry David Thoreau, Mohandas K. Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr.
- Anti-colonial and Indigenous declarations of self-determination
- Environmental and intergenerational frameworks recognizing duties to future life

This declaration does not replace these works. It responds to the conditions of the present era—marked by globalized power, technological systems operating beyond meaningful consent, extreme economic concentration, and ecological limits—and applies enduring principles to forms of authority not previously imagined. It is offered in continuity, not rupture.

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PREAMBLE

When power escapes accountability, citizens are left with a choice: silent acquiescence or principled refusal. The systems meant to protect rights can fail. When they do, citizens must speak clearly and act responsibly. This declaration addresses present conditions in the United States of America. It confronts systemic failures of accountability, consent, and dignity that have become widespread across institutions of governance—especially where public authority is entwined with concentrated wealth, corporate power, and unaccountable control over information.

When multiple branches of governance fail to function as independent checks, and mechanisms of oversight operate in form but not in substance, formal legality may persist while accountability collapses. Under such conditions, power can advance through lawful appearance while subverting constitutional purpose. This declaration does not rest on claims about the character, psychology, or intentions of any individual officeholder. It rests on observable conditions: the concentration of power without effective accountability, the erosion of constitutional constraints, and the substitution of formal procedure for genuine democratic consent. It does not claim authority over others. It does not govern. It does not authorize coercion, violence, or unlawful action. It is an act of conscience: a refusal to grant moral legitimacy to unaccountable power, and an affirmation of responsibility to one another, to truth, to constitutional order, and to the future.

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DECLARATION

This declaration is made in the first person to emphasize individual moral responsibility; it may be affirmed by any person according to conscience. I affirm that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. These rights do not originate from governments, institutions, markets, or force. They are inherent. Governments are created to secure these rights. Their just powers arise only from the informed, ongoing, and freely given consent of the people they affect. Authority that persists without such consent, or that nullifies meaningful avenues for accountability and redress, forfeits moral legitimacy even if it retains formal or legal power. I therefore declare my independence, in conscience and principle, from all forms of unaccountable power—political, economic, technological, judicial, and administrative— wherever they arise. This declaration of independence is moral and civic, not territorial, insurrectionary, or violent. It does not reject governance, law, or shared responsibility. It rejects domination without consent.

CONSTITUTIONAL FIDELITY

This declaration affirms fidelity to the Constitution of the United States as a framework intended to limit power, protect rights, and secure democratic consent—not as an instrument to be hollowed out, selectively applied, or subordinated to personal, partisan, or private rule. Where constitutional mechanisms are systematically subverted through bad-faith interpretation, captured enforcement, or deliberate non-compliance, citizens retain both the right and the responsibility to insist upon their restoration through lawful, peaceful, and collective means.

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FORMS OF UNACCOUNTABLE POWER

The practices named below share a common feature: power exercised without meaningful correction, consent, or responsibility. They are illustrative, not exhaustive.

Political, Legal, and Democratic Abuses

- Authority insulated from transparency, public oversight, or meaningful accountability
- Inequality before the law and impunity for powerful individuals or institutions
- De facto immunity from accountability for those holding high office or concentrated power
- Judicial systems compromised by conflicts of interest, weak recusal standards, or unequal access to justice
- Electoral systems that suppress participation, distort representation, or substitute procedural form for genuine consent

Democratic Capture and Authoritarian Consolidation

- Concentration of executive or administrative power without effective restraint
- Personalization of authority through loyalty rather than lawful duty
- Use of legal form to nullify popular sovereignty
- Systematic weakening of civic participation and opposition
- Conversion of public institutions into instruments of private or personal power

Economic and Institutional Abuses

- Concentrated wealth distorting public policy
- Regulatory capture
- Chronic under-enforcement of public protections
- Economic coercion through precarity or deprivation

Informational and Technological Abuses

- Manipulation or suppression of truth
- Profit-driven misinformation
- Surveillance or data practices undermining consent

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- Opaque automated systems without accountability

Social, Security, and Intergenerational Abuses

- Erosion of bodily autonomy and freedom of thought
- Normalization of emergency powers without clear limits
- Militarization of civilian governance
- Foreseeable harm to present or future generations
- Neglect of infrastructure, safety, and environmental stability

PRINCIPLES OF LEGITIMATE POWER

A Civic Standard

Legitimate power requires:

- Transparency
- Informed and ongoing consent
- Accountability and meaningful redress
- Proportionality and necessity
- Equality before the law
- The right of refusal and dissent
- Protection of truth
- Material freedom sufficient for real choice
- Economic systems structured to preserve meaningful opportunity and prevent domination through concentrated wealth
- Responsibility to future generations

Where these conditions are systematically violated, legitimacy fails—even when laws are formally enacted, elections are procedurally conducted, and courts continue to operate. These principles serve as a minimum civic benchmark for legitimate power, applicable without exception to all who govern or wield influence.

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CIVIC RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER SYSTEMIC FAILURE

When institutions fail these standards, citizens retain responsibilities grounded in care, discipline, and non-violence:

- Peaceful, lawful defense of constitutional order
- Support for independent journalism, education, and truth-seeking institutions
- Individual ethical refusal of unlawful or harmful directives, consistent with the law
- Mutual protection from coercion and intimidation
- Rebuilding democratic capacity at local and community levels
- Restoration of social trust, shared reality, and mutual obligation across divisions
- Refusal to dehumanize political opponents or treat disagreement as enmity

These duties require restraint, solidarity, and sustained civic effort—not violence.

TRANSITION: SCOPE AND LIMITS

This declaration addresses the United States because responsibility begins where one stands. The conditions named here are not unique to any nation or ideology. They arise wherever power escapes accountability. This document does not claim a universal moral order. It acknowledges the need for one.

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

This declaration anticipates the necessity of constitutional repair and democratic modernization to prevent future capture of power. Reform must be participatory, transparent, non-violent, and equal under the law.

NON-APPROPRIATION AND NON-VIOLENCE

This declaration belongs to no party, movement, or institution. It affirms disciplined non-violence, lawful dissent, and ethical refusal. It rejects coercion, harm, and intimidation as means of change.

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CONCLUSION

This declaration is a civic act in a particular time and place. It affirms that the people are not the failure. Systems can decay without extinguishing dignity, conscience, or the capacity for renewal.

It is also an invitation: to judge power by principle rather than allegiance, to refuse unaccountable authority, and to participate in the long work of building systems worthy of dignity, consent, and the future.

To affirm these principles is not an act of defiance, but an act of civic dignity.

Signed,
— A human being
United States of America
4 July 2026

APPENDIX A: CLARIFICATIONS

Is this a call to overthrow the government?

No. This declaration rejects violence, coercion, and unlawful action. It affirms peaceful, lawful civic responsibility.

Is this partisan?

No. It applies the same standards to all power, regardless of ideology or affiliation.

Does endorsement require total agreement?

No. Endorsement affirms the civic standard, not unanimity of opinion.

Why does it not name specific leaders or institutions?

Because legitimacy is judged by conditions and conduct, not personalities.

What does this ask people to do?

To think clearly, act lawfully, refuse dehumanization, support truth, and rebuild democratic trust locally and collectively.

APPENDIX B: ENDORSEMENT OF THE CIVIC STANDARD

Endorsement is an act of conscience, not affiliation. Those who choose to endorse this declaration do so as an act of conscience. Endorsement affirms agreement with the civic standard articulated here: that power over human lives is legitimate only when exercised transparently, accountably, non-violently, and with the informed and ongoing consent of the people affected. Endorsement does not imply agreement with every analysis, diagnosis, or example, nor affiliation with any party, movement, or institution. It signifies a commitment to judge power by principle rather than allegiance, and to pursue democratic renewal through lawful, peaceful, and ethical means.

ENDORSEMENT OF THE CIVIC STANDARD

Individual Endorsement

Name (optional)

City / State / Country (optional)

Date

Signature (optional)

Organizational or Group Endorsement

Organization / Group Name

Statement of Endorsement (optional)

Authorized Representative (if applicable)

Location

Date

Signature (optional)

Endorsement may be anonymous, attributed, collective, or symbolic. No registry is required. No authority is granted by signing.