

IN THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH YEAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE • JULY
4, 2026

A Declaration of Default

*Respectfully presented to the President of the United States,
and to a candid world.*

When in the course of a Republic's life it becomes necessary for a free people to call to account the one to whom they entrusted the highest office, and to set before him, and before a candid world, the causes of their grievance, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to this Declaration.

He holds the office by the lawful suffrage of the People, and the office is owed its due.

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 the trust of office is held upon an oath, and the oath is the whole of its title; and that when one entrusted with the office breaks faith with the oath, he does not thereby cease to hold the office, but he ceases to hold it in good faith — and the People, who lent him the power, have the right, and the duty, to say so.

The founders of this Republic declared a thing graver still: that when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce a people under absolute Despotism, it is not their right alone, but their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. This duty we do not disown. It is our inheritance, bought with the lives and fortunes and sacred honor of better men, and it descends to us entire. By the weight of the record we now set down, we take it up — openly, and into the light — that he, and a candid world, may see plainly what is held, and by what right it is held. Prudence will dictate that an office

long established, and a President lawfully chosen, should not be opposed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that a people are more disposed to suffer, while wrongs are sufferable, than to right themselves by remedies more grave. But sufferance has its term, and a candid world shall judge whether ours is reached. Such has been the patient sufferance of this People; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to set this record before him. The conduct of the present holder of the office is a history of repeated breaches of the faith his oath requires. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to a Law wholesome and necessary for the public good, vetoing the measure that would have carried clean water to near fifty thousand of his fellow citizens, though both Houses of the Congress had passed it without recorded dissent.

He has procured, by his own direction and out of the ordinary season, the redrawing of a State's electoral districts for the naked purpose of securing seats to his party — a design conceded as purely partisan even by those who declined to halt it.

He has turned the prosecuting power of the Nation against the States and Cities for laws lawfully their own to make, seeking through the courts to bend to his will the powers the Constitution reserves to them.

He has labored to fatigue the Legislature into compliance with his measures, threatening the adjournment of its chambers that he might appoint without its counsel, and suffering the Government to remain shuttered three-and-forty days that its necessities might be used as leverage against it.

He has branded as a traitor a member of his own party, for no offense but demanding the release of records he wished kept hidden — turning the weight of his office against dissent within his own ranks.

He has moved by his own fiat to seize the control of elections, issuing orders to bend their administration to his design, until the courts stayed his hand.

He has endeavoured to render the citizenship of the naturalized revocable at his pleasure, directing that its revocation be made a priority of his officers, and stripping

from some five-and-twenty millions of Americans the security of their standing; and he has branded the lawful dissent of the people as terrorism, by an order citing no authority in law, that the disfavored might be investigated, disrupted, and dismantled.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, making it the instrument of his will — sheltering by a flood of pardons those who served his purposes, and directing the prosecuting power of the State against those who opposed him; removing the officers who would not indict at his command and installing those who would; and declaring, in his own published words, that his adversaries were guilty and must be charged — so that the Law no longer shields the innocent nor pursues the guilty, but follows the favor and disfavor of one man.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, removing at his pleasure the judges of the immigration courts amid a backlog of millions, and demanding the impeachment of a judge who ruled against him — for which he was rebuked, in a rare public reproof, by the Chief Justice of the United States.

He has removed the Inspectors and watchmen set within his own Government to guard against corruption and abuse, dismissing some seventeen of them in a single purge without the notice the law requires, that none might oversee the conduct of his officers nor report it to the People.

He has erected a vast new apparatus of enforcement, and sent forth swarms of armed and masked Officers to harass the people in their communities and eat out their substance, concealing their names and their faces that none might know who wields the power of the State, nor hold them to account.

He has kept among us, in time of peace, Standing Armies directed against the people — federalizing the Guard of the States and sending it into their cities over the express objection of their Governors, and persisting after a unanimous Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States had ruled against him.

He has affected to render the Military independent of, and superior to, the Civil power, deploying troops to police the people until a federal judge found the

deployment a willful violation of the law, and warned that he had fashioned, in effect, a national police force with the President as its chief.

He has combined with private corporations, with his own appointed officers, and with the agencies of his Government, to subject us to authorities foreign to our Constitution and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his assent to their acts:

For quartering armed men among us, and forcing entry into the private home upon their own warrant, without the warrant of a Judge — breaking into the houses of citizens, among them a citizen seized at gunpoint in his own home and turned into the winter cold half-clothed, then returned without apology when the house was found mistaken; and punishing those who, keeping private houses of lodging, declined to quarter his armed agents:

For protecting those agents, by the concealment of their names and faces, from accountability for what they do to the inhabitants of these States:

For imposing Taxes upon us without our Consent, laying duties by his own decree upon the goods the people buy, until the Supreme Court of the United States held that he possessed no such power, and that the Constitution gives to the Congress alone access to the pockets of the people:

For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury, seizing and detaining persons within these States — among them citizens of this country — without hearing or recourse, until the courts had ruled, more than four thousand times, that the detentions were unlawful:

For transporting persons beyond the Seas, to a foreign prison, under an Act of 1798, with little or no hearing — among them men sent by his

officers' own admitted error — there to be held under conditions that independent investigators have found to amount to torture:

For withdrawing the Nation from its compacts for the common protection of health, abandoning by his own order the safeguards that guard his own people no less than others.

He has delivered into private hands, unaccountable to the People, the sovereign power to mark and to seize — contracting without open bidding for engines of surveillance that gather up the records of the citizen, his earnings, his movements, his papers, to single out those who shall be taken — so that the gravest power of the State is exercised for private profit, beyond the People's check and beyond the sight of their Representatives.

He has waged War upon a foreign Nation without the Declaration of the Congress, in whom alone that power is lodged; and having won the People's suffrages upon his solemn and oft-repeated pledge that he would begin no war but bring wars to their end, he ordered in a single night near nine hundred strikes upon the Nation of Iran, slew its head of state, and with him near one hundred and seventy souls gathered in a children's school, the most of them girls beneath the age of twelve — upon a day of his own choosing, when no necessity compelled the hour — igniting a war across a whole region and a convulsion in the commerce of the world, the cost of which has fallen upon a People who, through their Representatives, were never asked and never consented.

He has plundered our seas, ordering more than thirty strikes upon vessels and destroying, upon a thin and unproven pretext, the lives of more than one hundred persons, and seizing the head of a foreign state — giving to the Representatives of the People neither notice of the deed nor voice in it.

He has constrained the defenders of the Nation to choose between his command and their oath: branding as traitors, and pronouncing deserving of death, those who did no more than remind the soldier of his lawful duty to refuse an unlawful order; and moving, through his Department of War, to recall a sitting Senator into the service, that he might be arraigned before a military tribunal for words spoken in defense of

the Constitution — asserting thereby that obedience is owed to the man above the law.

He has elevated those who assailed the seat of the People's Government: forgiving by wholesale pardon the many who stormed the Capitol, and raising among them, to high office within the very Departments of Justice and of Law, men who cheered the beating of its defenders.

He has accepted gifts and emoluments from a foreign Power in contempt of the express prohibition of the Constitution, receiving an aircraft valued at some four hundred millions — the most costly gift ever pressed upon a President by a foreign state — without the consent of the Congress the Constitution requires; and has bent the public trust to his private gain through ventures bearing his own name.

He has laid hold of the public treasure as though it were his own — directing to monuments of his own design, and to ends the Congress never appropriated, moneys raised and pledged for other purposes; demolishing, over the objection of the keepers of the Nation's heritage, the whole of the East Wing of the People's House to raise a ballroom of his own at a cost mounting toward four hundred millions; and swelling thereby the debt of the Nation and the hazard of its credit, that the People's purse might serve his pleasure before their need.

He has turned the revenue and investigative powers of the State against his adversaries, and made of an office of justice an instrument of persecution, that those who opposed him might be made to fear the very machinery of their Government.

He has made war upon the freedom of the Press, banishing reporters who would not adopt his words, wielding the licensing power of the State against broadcasters whose coverage displeased him, and exacting settlements from those who would not bend — that the People might be left without an honest account of their Government.

He has abandoned the protection of those who bore the Nation's arms — having first dissolved the safeguard that kept the disabled soldier in his home, and then signed into law the relief the Congress, without dissent, had framed to restore it, only to

suffer it to lie unbuilt and inoperative for the space of a year, while ten thousand veterans lost their homes and ninety thousand more stood at the edge of the same ruin.

He has used the People's own House, and the authority they lent him, to disparage and erase the choices they lawfully made — setting in its halls inscriptions, penned by his own hand, that pronounce the Presidents whom the People elected the worst and most divisive of men — holding in contempt not those men alone, but the verdict of the Nation that chose them.

He has governed by distraction, raising spectacles to draw the eyes of the People from the conduct of their Government, and dangling marvels at the very hours when the law was defied, the courts overruled, and the costs of his wars laid bare — so practiced in the device that men of his own party named it for what it was.

In every stage of these Oppressions the People have sought Redress by the lawful means a Republic affords: by the Congress, whose plain commands he has defied; by the Courts, which have ruled against him, from the lowest bench to the Supreme Court of the United States, more times than can here be numbered; and by the patient voice of the People themselves. His answer has been to attack the courts that judged him, to defy the laws that bound him, and to brand as enemies those who held him to account.

We, therefore, in the Name, and by the Authority, of the People of the United States, do solemnly publish and declare: That the President of the United States has defaulted upon the compact of his office, and broken faith with the oath he swore to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.

The duty we took up at the head of this Declaration — the duty the founders bequeathed us, to throw off a Government that turns to tyranny — that duty, and that right, having shown it plainly and by what title we hold it, we now lay down again. We lay it down in hope, and not in surrender: in the truest prayer that his nobler nature might show, that these grievances might be undone, and that the faith between the People and their President might be made whole. We do not choose, at this time, to take it up in earnest.

We stand within the constitutional order, not outside it; we grant the office every legitimacy the People conferred upon it; and we reserve only those remedies the order itself secures to a free people — to speak, to assemble, to petition our Government for a redress of grievances, and to render our verdict at the ballot. These, and these alone, are the remedies that are ours, and they are remedy enough.

But a thing laid down is not a thing surrendered. What we have set aside, we may take up again — and the hand that lowered it has not let go. The choice of whether it rises is his. The future is tenuous.

Signatories. — On the public document, the curated and consenting names. On each signer's own copy, their name set as the bold central signature, in the place where Hancock signed.