

# Absolution

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ABSOLUTION The Declaration of Independence and Constitution of The United States of America The United States Declaration of Independence The Declaration of Independence was approved on July 4, 1776 by members of the Second Continental Congress in Independence Hall (then known as the Pennsylvania State House) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as a means to cut ties and governance with mother England. Unbeknownst at the time, it also lay the philosophical basis to the United States Constitution, that all men are created equal. Declaring independence from England was only the first of two historical moments in our nation's history that set us onto the path of greatness that we travel upon today. Our forefathers so greatly believed in our new country and its independence that they risked their lives by signing The Declaration of Independence, for at the time, doing so was treason against England and was punishable by death and dismemberment. Fifty-six of these " traitors" would go on to sign the document, some of them later becoming president's themselves. Their intent to sever ties with England is directly spelled out in the first sentence of The Declaration of Independence, " When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another..." (<http://www.archives.gov>). The United States Constitution The United States Constitution, however, was signed by 38 of 41 delegates present at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia on September 17, 1787. Shay's Rebellion was a wake-up call to our forefathers as a call for a new all encompassing constitution and powerful government that included participation by all states while at the same time, limiting its powers through a system of checks and balances. Prior to the current Constitution, The

United States was governed under the Articles of Confederacy.

Unfortunately, this left the country with states acting almost like their own small countries and no national government able to raise an army or to collect taxes. Other problems with the Articles of Confederation included no national or singular currency, a unicameral legislature, and no national executive or court system only to name a few (<http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us>).

Alleged Abuses Thomas Jefferson and others cited alleged abuses by England as a call for American independence. Many of these alleged abuses are written in The Declaration of Independence itself. The document alleges that the King of England subjected colonists to foreign jurisdiction that did not acknowledge the current laws of the land. Many of the alleged abuses described in The Declaration of Independence have a direct tie to the Constitution. For example, the document alleges that the King of England allowed for the quartering of troops amongst the people, imposed taxes without consent or representation, and denied the people a trial by jury only to name a few. Nearly two-thirds of the entire document is dedicated to specifically naming all of the alleged abuses by the King of England before it ends with a call to be " free and independent states" (<http://www.archives.gov>). Although it took Jefferson just under three weeks to write The Declaration, Congress spent nearly 4 days (July 1-4) debating and revising it ([www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org)). The Constitution and Prevention of Future Abuse The original text and the first Ten Amendments of the United States Constitution sought to prevent any future abuses such as those cited by Thomas Jefferson in The Declaration of Independence. Each of the single articles that were written into the Constitution were based largely on correcting and preventing

these abuses that England had allegedly committed. The framers of the Constitution wanted to create a government that would be both strong and unyielding, yet limit its power at the same time. During these times, many early colonists were afraid of government as they had seen first-hand how it can quickly turn towards a tyrannical type of governance. The separation of the powers amongst the three branches served as a way to ensure that no party became too powerful and the laws for enacting these branches are spelled out in the first three articles of the Constitution. The Bill of Rights, however, were what many believed to be the most important and a required part of the Constitution. The Bill of Rights would specifically enumerate the certain rights guaranteed to each individual citizen of the new country. Still fresh in the minds of everyone was the tyrannical rule of the King of England and in order to prevent abuses by the new government, the Congress introduced the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights established guaranteed protection for the citizens regarding freedom of religion (Amendment I), the right to bear arms (Amendment II), quartering of soldiers (Amendment III), unreasonable search and seizure (Amendment IV), self incrimination (Amendment V), right to a quick and speedy trial (Amendment VI), fair trial by jury (Amendment VII), cruel and unusual punishment, (Amendment VIII), rights of the people even though they may not be listed in The Bill of Rights (Amendment IX), reservation of certain powers to the States (Amendment X) ([www. archives. gov](http://www.archives.gov)). The original Constitution and The Bill of Rights sought to prevent abuses of government by specifically outlining these protections and making the restraint of these rights illegal. Ethics Ethics is a philosophy which addresses morality or moral issues. In my opinion, when regarding

ethics in the writing of the Constitution, it could be said that ethics is somewhat absent in regards to certain aspects. For example, Article IV of The United States Constitution specifically addresses the issue of slavery without abolishing the act. The 4th Article simply states that if a person was a slave in one state and were to escape to another, they were still a slave and would be " delivered up on a claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due" (<http://www.archives.gov>). It wasn't until the 13th Amendment that slavery was finally abolished in The United States of America. While the Bill of Rights and the Constitution set out to defend the equality of all men (people), it failed to address the issue of slavery and only allowed for the continuance of the act, even though the preamble specifically calls for the " blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" (<http://www.archives.gov>). References Davenport, Anniken (2009). Basic Criminal Law, The Constitution, Procedure, and Crimes (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc. The Hoover Archives: Revolutionary America! (2002, November 3). Retrieved October 30, 2009, from exhibit website: <http://hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/RevAmerica/3-When/Treason.html> The Ithaca City School District. (2009, November 1). Retrieved November 1, 2009, from: <http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/legacy/highschool/pjordan/ushonors/Regents%20Review/Review%20Lessons/articlesofconfederation.html> Ashford University : The Declaration of Independence. (2009, November 1). Retrieved November 1, 2009, from: ([http://ashford.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab\\_id=\\_2\\_1&url=/webapps/blackboard/execute/launcher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D\\_129630\\_1%26url%3D](http://ashford.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_id=_2_1&url=/webapps/blackboard/execute/launcher%3Ftype%3DCourse%26id%3D_129630_1%26url%3D) The United States History: The <https://assignbuster.com/absolution/>

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