

1 **RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY**
2 **(SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL) OF THE UNITED STATES OF**
3 **AMERICA**

4 2020 GENERAL SESSION

5 STATE OF UTAH

6 **Chief Sponsor: Mike Winder**

7 Senate Sponsor: Kirk A. Cullimore

8 Cosponsor:

9 Jefferson Moss

11 **LONG TITLE**

12 **General Description:**

13 This concurrent resolution recognizes and commemorates the 250th anniversary, or
14 semiquincentennial, of the United States of America.

15 **Highlighted Provisions:**

16 This resolution:

17 ▶ recognizes the foundational, historical, and political significance of the signing of
18 the Declaration of Independence by the Second Continental Congress on July 4,

19 1776; and

20 ▶ requests that the Governor organize a commission to plan, encourage, develop, and
21 coordinate a statewide effort commemorating and celebrating the 250th anniversary
22 of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

23 **Special Clauses:**

24 None

26 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

27 WHEREAS, the United States Declaration of Independence from Great Britain was
28 adopted by the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776; and

29 WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence was drafted by a committee of five
30 representatives that included John Adams, a leader in the push for independence, and Thomas
31 Jefferson, who did most of the original drafting of the document; and

32 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Declaration of Independence was to announce formally
33 that the 13 American colonies were at war with the Kingdom of Great Britain and would
34 henceforth regard themselves as 13 independent, sovereign states, no longer subject to British
35 rule; and

36 WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence justified the independence of the United
37 States by listing the colonial grievances against King George III and asserting certain natural
38 and legal rights, including the right of revolution; and

39 WHEREAS, John Adams wrote to his wife Abigail after the Declaration of
40 Independence's signing that he believed that Independence Day "will be celebrated, by
41 succeeding Generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated as the
42 Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized
43 with Pomp and Parade, with shows, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations
44 from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more"; and

45 WHEREAS, after ratifying the text on July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress
46 issued the Declaration of Independence in several forms, sending a copy to each colony, King
47 George III of England, and General George Washington and ordering an official copy, which
48 was eventually placed on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. in February of
49 1924; and

50 WHEREAS, one of the original copies of the Declaration of Independence was
51 displayed in the Utah State Capitol in February and March of 2002, as a centerpiece to the
52 Cultural Olympiad of the 2002 Utah Winter Olympics, and viewed by over 40,000 people; and

53 WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence contained principles that are of major
54 significance in the national heritage of the United States, including individual liberty,
55 representative government, and the attainment of equal and inalienable rights; and

56 WHEREAS, perhaps the most memorable sentence in the Declaration of Independence,

57 a sentence that was especially significant to President Abraham Lincoln during the American
58 Civil War, states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that
59 they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life,
60 Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"; and

61 WHEREAS, President Lincoln considered the Declaration of Independence to be the
62 foundation of his political philosophy, calling it "a rebuke and stumbling block to tyranny and
63 oppression," and explained that the Declaration of Independence is a statement of principles
64 through which the United States Constitution should be interpreted; and

65 WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence inspired many similar documents in other
66 countries, including the Declaration of Flanders, issued during the Brabant Revolution in what
67 is modern-day Belgium, and documents issued during other independence movements in
68 Europe, Latin America, Africa, and New Zealand; and

69 WHEREAS, the lands that would become Utah were the homelands of Native
70 American tribes, including the Utes, Shoshone, Paiute, Goshutes, and Diné at the time of the
71 signing of the Declaration of Independence; and

72 WHEREAS, in the same year the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Spanish
73 territory of New Spain sent two Franciscan priests, Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de
74 Escalante, to find an overland route from Santa Fe to central California, the two priests thereby
75 becoming the first documented European explorers to travel through Utah; and

76 WHEREAS, all Utah citizens benefit from the principles espoused within the
77 Declaration of Independence, as well as the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights,
78 and studies have found Utah is one of the most patriotic states in the nation; and

79 WHEREAS, the Utah Territory's first governor, Brigham Young, stated regarding the
80 Declaration: "We as a people have more reason to respect, honor, love and cherish the
81 Government of the United States, and her Constitution and free institutions than any other
82 people upon the face of the earth"; and

83 WHEREAS, Public Law 114-196, passed by the 114th United States Congress and
84 signed by the President on July 22, 2016, establishes the United States Semiquincentennial

85 Commission and encourages similar state and local efforts to coordinate with the national
86 effort:

87 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
88 Governor concurring therein, recognizes the foundational, historical, and political significance
89 of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and requests that the Governor organize a
90 commission to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of
91 Independence on July 4, 2026, to be staffed and administered by the Department of Heritage
92 and Arts.

93 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall be inclusive and composed
94 of members with an interest in the celebration, expertise in related fields, and who represent
95 broad demographic and geographic diversity.