

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

2020 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Mike Winder

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

Committee Note:

The Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee recommended this bill.

Legislative Vote: 10 voting for 0 voting against 7 absent

General Description:

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

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

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

1776; and

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

Special Clauses:

None



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

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

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

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

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

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

47 WHEREAS, after ratifying the text on July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress
48 issued the Declaration of Independence in several forms, sending a copy to each colony, King
49 George III of England, and General George Washington and ordering an official copy, which
50 was eventually placed on display at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. in February of
51 1924; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

85 WHEREAS, Public Law 114-196, passed by the 114th United States Congress and
86 signed by the President on July 22, 2016, establishes the United States Semiquincentennial
87 Commission and encourages similar state and local efforts to coordinate with the national
88 effort:

89 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the

90 Governor concurring therein, recognizes the foundational, historical, and political significance
91 of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and requests that the Governor organize a
92 commission to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of
93 Independence on July 4, 2026, to be staffed and administered by the Department of Heritage
94 and Arts.

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