

DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS: MODERN TRANSLATION

(1) Sometimes in history it becomes necessary for one group of people in the human race to change the position in society that they have held up until this point, as the laws of Nature and of God say that they can, but when this happens, they should show respect for all peoples by explaining the reasons why they want to change.

(2) We think these things are obviously true: that all men **and women** are created equal, that they have the same rights given to them by God that cannot be taken away, and among these God-given rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

(3) To protect these rights, people create governments that receive their power from the people agreeing to be governed -- (4) But whenever any government is getting in the way of these God-given rights, people have the right to refuse to live by that government's rules or get rid of it, and to demand a new government, in a way that seems most likely to guarantee that its people will be safe and happy.

(5) People should not change their government without a serious reason; history has shown that people usually suffer as long as they can under the government they have, rather than change it. (6) But when there have been a lot of problems for a long time, it is their right and their duty to throw off that government, and to set up a better government that will protect them and their rights.

(7) This is how women have suffered; now it is necessary for them to demand the equal rights that they deserve. (8) History shows that men have repeatedly abused and undermined women to the extent that they have established absolute control over women. (9) To prove this, let's look at the facts:

(10) He has never allowed her to vote.

(11) He has made her follow laws when she has no voice in the creation of the laws because she cannot hold a political office.

- (12) He has withheld rights from her, like the right to vote, that he has given to even the stupidest men.
- (13) He has taxed her without representation.
- (14) If she *is* married, he has taken away all of her rights.
- (15) He has taken away her right to property, even the money she earns working.
- (16) He has created the divorce laws in his favor so that she can lose all property, even her children, should he decide to divorce her.
- (17) He has not allowed her to work in profitable jobs, and in the jobs that she *is* allowed to work in, he pays her less than he pays other men who do the same job.
- (18) He has kept from her the ability to receive a true education, with all colleges being closed to her.
- (19) He has tried in every way to destroy her confidence in her own abilities, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a life dependent on him.

- (20) Now, keeping in mind the list above, women feel robbed of their God-given rights, and we now insist that women have all of the rights that belong to them given to them immediately as citizens of the United States. (21) We know that people will make fun of us for trying to achieve this goal, but we will do everything in our power to see to it that women have equal rights with men. (22) We hope that this will be the first of many conventions in the name of women's rights.

DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS: ORIGINAL (1848)

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men - both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes, with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master - the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women - the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education - all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation, - in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.