

Sharing the Spirit of America in California

WHAT: As the nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, and its first public reading on July 8, 1776, join in the cross-country, simultaneous reading of the document to remind us of the ideals our nation was founded on.

WHO: Gather with your community or opt to read the text alone.

WHEN: Wednesday, July 8, 2026 at 3pm (PT) to coincide with the simultaneous reading across U.S. states and territories.

WHERE: Gather where you see fit - from your local park, library, or community gathering spot.

HOW: Find the text of the Declaration of Independence [here](#).

IMPORTANT CONTEXT:

Adopted on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence announced a bold and world-changing idea: that people are born with inherent rights, that governments exist to secure those rights, and that legitimacy flows from the consent of the governed. In asserting that all are endowed with the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the Declaration gave voice to universal principles that would inspire democratic movements around the globe and continue to shape struggles for freedom, equality, and self-determination more than two centuries later.

At the same time, the Declaration is a product of its era and reflects deep moral contradictions. Its authors proclaimed liberty while tolerating slavery, denying women political rights, and excluding many from the promises they articulated. Most starkly, the text contains language that dehumanized Native American peoples and helped justify dispossession, violence, and broken treaties.

The enduring importance of the Declaration lies not only in what it achieved in 1776, but in what it demands of each generation. Its principles set a standard against which the nation has repeatedly been judged—and challenged—to expand freedom, confront injustice, and move closer to its stated ideals. On this 250th anniversary, we read the Declaration not as a finished promise, but as an unfinished one: a call to reckon honestly with our past, to listen to voices long excluded, and to recommit ourselves to the work of liberty and equality for all.

[Click here](#) to show your California pride and community pride by “pinning” your reading location on the Sharing the Spirit of America website. You can elect to keep your exact location private.

[Sharing the Spirit of America](#) is a nonpartisan initiative led by the [Hawai'i America250 Commission](#).