

ASAC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Monday, June 28, 2021

Good morning! The beginning of a new work week, Monday, June 28, the final week of June and first days of July.

The fourth of July weekend is coming at the end of the week. We celebrate July 4th year after year and unless we retell the story of independence, we lose just how monumental this document is and the genius behind the words that are as true today as they were in 1776.

Considering what Jefferson knew that “When tyranny becomes law, rebellion becomes duty.” He understood that “When people fear the government there is tyranny, when the government fears the people there is liberty.” Jefferson knew what the path ahead would be should the declaration be adopted, and he pressed on.

The Declaration of Independence was the first formal statement by a nation’s people asserting their right to choose their own government. Armed conflict had begun prior to the writing of the Declaration in April of 1775 between British soldiers and bands of American colonists. Even after the initial battles in the Revolutionary War broke out, few colonists desired complete independence from Great Britain, and those who did—like John Adams— were considered radical. Things changed over the course of the next year, however, as Britain attempted to crush the rebels with all the force of its great army. In his message to Parliament in October 1775, King George III railed against the rebellious colonies and ordered the enlargement of the royal army and navy. News of his words reached America in January 1776, strengthening the radicals’ cause and leading many conservatives to abandon their hopes of reconciliation. That same month, the recent British immigrant Thomas Paine published “Common Sense,” in which he argued that independence was a “natural right” and the only possible course for the colonies; the pamphlet sold more than 150,000 copies in its first few weeks in publication.

The Continental Congress reconvened on July 1, and the following day 12 of the 13 colonies adopted Lee’s resolution for independence. The process of consideration and revision of Jefferson’s declaration (including Adams’ and Franklin’s corrections) continued July 3 and into the late morning of July 4, during which Congress deleted and revised some one-fifth of its text. The delegates made no changes to that key preamble, however, and the basic document remained Jefferson’s words. Congress officially adopted the Declaration of Independence later the Fourth of July. The Declaration was approved by 12 of the 13 colonies with New York abstaining therefore, it was not signed until almost a month later as the Congress had the approval of all 13 colonies by July 9, 1776.

The Declaration of Independence became a significant landmark in the history of democracy. In addition to its importance in the fate of the fledgling American nation, it also exerted a tremendous influence outside the United States, most memorably in France during the French Revolution. Together with the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence can be counted as one of the three essential founding documents of the United States government.

I challenge you to read the Declaration of Independence, it is an amazing document and I assure you in it’s reading you will feel a sense of pride and renewed commitment to these United States. We are family. We quarrel and disagree but there are principles so basic and so ‘self-evident’ that as we revisit this declaration, we are reminded of what unites us.

Make it a good week and have a safe and happy fourth of July weekend.