

President's Report by Starlyn Brown

The Price of Freedom: Reflections on America's 250th Birthday

On July 4, 2026, our nation celebrates a remarkable milestone—the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On that day in 1776, thirteen colonies boldly declared themselves the **United States of America**, transforming colonies into states.

Most Americans are familiar with these inspiring words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

But it is the final sentence that truly reveals the gravity of their choice:

"And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

The signers understood a profound truth: **freedom is not free**. They knew there would be steep costs—lives lost, families forever changed, fortunes sacrificed, and reputations put at risk. Yet they signed their names anyway.

Timeless Grievances, Modern Echoes

While we often focus on the inspiring philosophy of the preamble, the core of the document actually consists of **27 specific grievances** against King George III. I'll admit that until recently, I hadn't closely examined these. I highly encourage everyone to visit the [National Archives Declaration of Independence Transcription](#) to read them in full.

What I found when reading through them was deeply striking—and frankly, disturbing. Though written in the language of 1776, many of these grievances carry a meaning that feels incredibly relevant and resonates in our current political climate.

Consider how closely these historical warnings echo modern concerns about the overreach of power and the erosion of civic institutions:

- Obstruction of justice and interference with the judiciary;
- Judges being dependent upon the will of those in power;
- The creation of excessive government offices and burdens on the people;
- Military power operating without proper civilian oversight;

- Taxation without consent;
- Deprivation of the right to trial by jury; and
- Fundamental changes to government without the consent of the governed.

A Call to Action: It's Time to Be Bold

The Revolutionary War was a grueling, painful struggle. Our forefathers did not declare independence lightly. They calculated the immense cost, braced themselves, and chose to be bold anyway. They chose courage.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, their example offers us an important reminder. Democracy is not self-sustaining. Constitutional principles cannot defend themselves. Voting rights must be protected by engaged and informed citizens.

It is once again time to be bold.

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico has always stood for democracy, constitutional principles, and the rights of voters. As a grassroots organization, our strength comes from ordinary people who are willing to raise their voices and take action.

On this historic anniversary, let us honor those who pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor by recommitting ourselves to the work of self-government.

Freedom is not free. Democracy requires participation. And our voices still matter.

We must be unyielding in defending democracy, protecting the Constitution, and empowering voters. We are a grassroots organization, which means our true strength comes from the ground up. We have a powerful voice—and this election year, it's time to get louder!