

## *#10 – Declaration of Teenage Independence*

In the course of an individual's life, one must begin the stringent task of discovering who they are. We as a society recognized this time in life "the teenage years". In this stage, teens struggle to discover themselves while being bombarded with "advice" by those who consider themselves more wise, more mature, and more experienced than them. In this daunting time in our lives, we teens continue to declare our concerns and remain unanswered. The moment has arrived for us to demand the privileges adults have long withheld from our grasp.

We, the teens of Spring Valley High School's class of 2020, hold these truths to be unquestionably true and present them to the society of the United States of America. We hold true that all people are individuals that have unique skills, and with these skills, possess an opportunity to choose how to live their life. As people, teens retain these rights as well.

As teens, adults tell us to be as rare and unique as the diamonds in the earth; and yet adults shun us if we do not fit into their standards of living. Which is the correct choice? Are we expected to be a diamond or a meek stone?

Adults tell us we are old enough to think for ourselves and that we shouldn't go with the popular crowd. But as soon as we voice our views, adults tell us we are "just kids". If we are able to think for ourselves and form our own political views, we should voice them. It is morally unjustified: adults should not be the only ones in the political sphere.

We are fully capable of driving, holding jobs, and purchasing necessities. If we are able to live mature lives, adults should view us as equally mature as them. We know what we believe is right and what is wrong. We know what we want in life and how we want to live it. Yet adults continue to mollycoddle and speak to us as if we were born yesterday.

The adults force us to endure strenuous testing that places us through vigorous mental trials that place undue stress upon our growing minds. These tests put harsh labels on us. They judge us not on how we solve problems, but on how well we can retain information dumped on us year after year. Then they

judge us based on these arbitrary labels when we teens understand that intelligence is far more than a simple number.

They shackle us to school subjects not in our choosing. Subjects that do not interest us nor challenge the skills we hold dear to our hearts. They do not allow us to decide what we want to pursue. Instead, they force us to learn subjects that will never apply to our future as adults.

They do not allow us to take days off of this maddening work in order to recuperate. It's barbaric that we cannot let our minds relax after being put through such mental torture.

We are not even allowed to wear what we so wish without being judged by our elders. It's absurd that we cannot express ourselves in the simple choice of what we choose to clothe our bodies. It's archaic that rules should be forced upon us that tell us what we can and cannot wear.

Instead of gaining freedom, we are enslaved to the ideals of a society long gone. What will our taskmasters do now that we rebel? We have made innumerable attempts to gain the attention of those older than us. Instead of listening, they turn us away as if we are trash beneath their feet.

We demand adults stop constraining us to the standards of living and allow us to flourish on our own.

We demand the right to representation in our government so that our voices might be heard.

We demand respect.

We demand adults stop judging us based on our GPA and test scores.

We demand a choice in our classes.

We demand more days to recuperate from stressful times.

And we demand adults stop judging us based on what we wear.

It is despicable that these issues have persisted for so long. These must be a change. And so, by following the footsteps of our founding fathers, we - the representatives of Spring Valley High School's class of 2020 - declare our right to individuality, choice, and freedom.