

2 - Declaration of Independence

Part of growing up is learning to be independent. To become independent it is necessary for one to challenge themselves out of their comfort zones and to be aware of what they need and want. We, the teenagers of America, need to exercise these ideals to grow and develop into an independent adult that affects our society in a positive way.

As a growing generation, we deserve to be treated with the equal amount of respect as adults, not to be looked down or talked down upon, and be listened to when speaking our minds. When a change is made that affects us negatively, we will stand up and challenge the authority because we are strong, intelligent, and determined. Parents, teachers, and other adults have been controlling us for too long. It's time to make some changes.

They have refused to listen to our desperate pleas of dismissal when arriving to school late. Many factors affect how and when we get to school. Will my car start in the morning? Did the snowplow clear my road or block my driveway in? These uncontrollable factors lead to “tardies” that are happily given out by the office. In most cases it is better to just stay home and pretend to be sick instead of risking three tardies that equate to a detention. This system must change.

They have taken away school lunch quality and quantity. Adults don't understand that five measly chicken nuggets do not suppress the appetite of growing teenagers. The average school lunch contains only 800 calories, this is too little of calories for growing teenagers who are also involved in sports that are physically demanding. Most of the “new” sides available are unappetizing and are not taken by most students. The school lunch programs should listen to us and take into account our opinions.

They have disregarded our busy schedules and expect us to fit in with theirs. In our busy schedules, students don't go straight home and have time for homework. Most of us are involved in sports or have a job to go to after school. After sporting events and extra curriculars students arrive back at their houses on average around 10pm to 11pm. Work shifts afterschool can last up to six or seven hours leading to the same arrival time as some athletes. Teachers assign us two hours of homework on average every night. Us students are then faced with a choice, get sleep to perform better at work or in sports or to finish our homework. Teachers and adults need to listen to us.

They have restricted what we wear to school. The dress code needs to be changed around the country to allow us to wear what we feel is comfortable. In addition, hats should be allowed to be

worn in schools. Freedom of expression is written in our constitution. Why shouldn't we be able to express ourselves through means of dressing? This unfair system needs to be changed.

They have taken away our cell phones at home and in school. Adults should not have the right to take away our phones when they feel like it is being a "distraction". The people who pay for the phones should be in control of how and when we use these devices. Teachers say "it takes your attention away from education". If we care about education or if the subjects will interest us we will learn. Giving us busy work is pointless if we already understand the topic. If you waste our time, we will waste yours.

They have denied us the right to call in sick for ourselves and sign our own permission slips. The inability to do these simple things causes many problems throughout the school year. For an example, kids have missed field trips because their parents were not in town to sign the slip to be allowed on the field trip. We are constantly being told that we should be more independent. How are we supposed to be independent if adults require a parent signature for just about everything we do? Getting a parent signature only creates a boundary that we need to work our way around.

They have forced us to take semester tests, usually fourteen per school year. Making us study for hours on end only stresses us out. These tests take away from the sacred time of "education" that seems to be very important to teachers. In addition, why should I have to study multiple hours to take a test that doesn't relate to the field I want to have a career in? We need to change this flawed system.

We, the teenagers of the United States of America declare to be treated as equally as adults, to have a voice in the rules that affect us most, and to be allowed the independence we are capable of. Our country is rapidly growing and changing. The changing of our country and culture requires a change in our rules and laws. We are physically and emotionally drained by rules put in place to restrict us. It is now time to break the rules of the past. It is time to break tradition. Establishing ourselves as the next generation is not all we will do. We will make our lives better. We will better the lives of others. We will make our nation better.