

#21 - Declaration of Teenage Independence

When, in the course of human events often experienced by a teenager, it becomes necessary for high school students to distinguish the line between appropriate boundaries put on us and absurd boundaries. There comes a time when young adults must stand up against the unfair inequality and fight for our well deserved rights.

We, the teenagers of the United States of America, hold these truths to be self evident that we are treated equal to our elders, we are heard and acknowledged when it is necessary, we are understood by authorities of the school systems, and granted leniency when it comes to homework. We demand to have equality. We demand to be heard. We demand to be granted more freedom. We demand to be guaranteed a quality education without the constant homework that is close to impossible to keep caught up on. Teenagers have a voice and busy schedules and adults have failed to understand this, but that ends today.

They deny us the right to eat lunch off campus. The school fails to provide food that is essentially good for your health, or that suits the needs of people who have food allergies, are gluten free, lactose free and etc. The lines are crazy, and it takes forever to get your food. We should be able to eat where we want for lunch because that's what our futures of college life and worklife will require us to do. It will teach us punctuality for our near future, and if students are late to their next class then consequences will follow.

They deny us the right to wear what we want to school. It is a fact that dress codes are illegal to have in schools, but they still tell us what we can and cannot wear based on whether or not its a "distraction". They are our clothes and we buy them, as long as we aren't obstructing the view of other students, or seriously interfering with the education of others, we should not be told what not to wear, to remove our hoods in the school, or to wear certain length shirts with certain width straps.

They deny us the right to stay home for mental health days as an excuse. School is draining, and they are not aware of the battles some students fight within themselves and at home. Without your mind in a healthy state, your focus and attitude at school will worsen, grades will go down and opportunities you once had will fade away because your mental health is not a valid excuse for staying home to refresh for the next day.

They deny us the right to have a voice in school, to be heard, or even acknowledged for our ideas. We have ideas as much as anyone else of any other age. We are told to share our ideas and that we have a say in things and that we can make a change in the world or even the environment around us. But our ideas are shut down immediately and we are told that there will be consequences if we continue fighting for what we believe should be done. What is the point of following their

encouragement in sharing our ideas and making a change if we are seldomly viewed as mature enough to have these ideas?

They fail to understand the hours that students put in each day. We wake up ridiculously early, attend classes for 8 hours, and then on top of that we have sports, jobs, chores or other things that we participate in. We are encouraged to participate in many things by our teachers, or told to have jobs by our parents, but then are told to complete multiple classes homework and return it the next day. They then badger us about not getting enough sleep if we are unable to stay awake or even focus in class. Many of us put in almost 16 hour days without the loads of homework to do.

They require us to attend school for classes that are irrelevant electives, and that will not benefit our future in any way. A student attending college for nursing should not be required to attend an agriculture class that they were placed into for the sole reason of not having anymore important beneficial classes to take. Students should be granted free periods during hours that no classes are needed, instead of just being placed in an unbeneficial class that they don't have the slightest bit of interest in.

They require us to complete an absurd amount of homework and then are unable to complete grading for weeks on end, even with a simple worksheet for some teachers. Why are we forced to rush and do a sloppy job on our homework if they are able to go home right after school or events and spend time with their family? Students put in a crazy amount of hours a day without the homework, and most of us manage to get as much done as we can. If we are forced to complete homework for the next day with, on average, having the biggest schedule out of any of them, then our assignments should also be graded in a timely manner. They use the excuse of having families and responsibilities, but they don't take into consideration the students that have to take care of their younger siblings because their parents are never home, or the students that work until 10 at night and then have homework to do because it is due the next day. If students are required to satisfy their teachers with completed homework each day, then teachers should be required to have the assignment graded the day that follows the due date.

They require us to make up our homework for the next day if we have an academic field trip. The authority figures are responsible for these field trips and they are academic, so why do we have to make up the homework that we didn't even get taught? It makes field trips less enjoyable since you are dreading the amount of homework you are about to have when you get home.

We, therefore, the teenagers of eleventh grade English class assembled, ask for our complaints and intentions for equality among all ages to be taken into consideration and carried out with the approval of teenagers everywhere. We solemnly declare that we have rights against an absurd amount of homework, unfair rules, and unfair treatment and judgement by the authority figures that we are surrounded by everyday for hours on end. We, therefore, pledge our loyalty to the support of this declaration and to changing the stigma that hovers over us and defines us anywhere we go.