

#28-Declaration of Independence

When in the course of teenagers life on earth, there comes a time when it is necessary for a change to be made and to separate from the bonds that have held them down thus far. Just because we, the teenagers and students of this generation, are not adults yet, does not mean that we are not entitled to human rights. We deserve to have a say in how our lives are dictated if we respectfully acknowledge the opinions of others. Our voices should be given credit rather than just cast away, leaving us feel unwanted and rejected.

We, students of not only Spring Valley High School, but teenagers everywhere, hold these truths to be obvious and reasonable. All students and teenagers are created equal. Because of this, we should be designated certain rights, that among these are a quality-stress-free education, opportunities, and the quest for happiness. Since we have tried again and again to question adult's authority and kindly request our input on matters of our own lives, but been denied yet so far, we are establishing our own rights. Student rights. Teenager rights. We now have control over who we are and what we do. To prove this, let the facts of our harsh reality of teenage and high school life be known to the world.

They have given us so much homework that we have to choose between sleep and a social life. After school, a student may have athletic practices, a sporting event, pep band, confirmation or church groups, meetings of other clubs such as 4-H, a job, or many other obligations. After doing these things, it is about nine or ten at night by the time students get home. Then we are to eat supper and shower. Leaving us the time to do homework anywhere from eleven PM to when school starts the next day. Wow. No sleep for students tonight. On the contrary, students could go home right after school, do their homework until about seven or eight, and go to bed. Now the student would have no friends or is not involved in any high school activities. This causes the student to feel depressed, alone, and meaningless. This should not be something we have to choose between. Students of Spring Valley High School are given endless amounts of homework and it needs to be moderated.

They have denied us the right to have privacy. As if every possession we own, everything we talk about, and everything we do belongs to them and is under their control. A teacher wants your phone? They can take it. An administrator wants to get in your locker? They can open it.

They have told us that at a mere seventeen years old, we have to decide what we want to do after high school and have a plan for the rest of our lives. We are constantly hounded with questions about what we want to be when we are older. People need us to figure out if we are going to further our education and then where we want to go out of the 5,300 colleges located in the

United States as noted in the Washington Post. This is no easy task, along with looking at the programs offered and what your majors and minors might be. If not this, we are asked if we are getting a job after high school, how we will support ourselves, and where we are going to live. Maybe you are thinking of going to serve our country, you need to know by the time high school is finished. These choices and decisions affect the rest of our lives and we have a never ending stress about 'making the wrong choice.'

They have restricted our lunch at school to saltless food that the government lets the cafeteria distribute or a paper bag lunch that was packed in three minutes before a student left the house. I have before had my lunch consisting of only an apple and granola bar, leaving me hungry and unfocused for the rest of the school day. We deserve an open campus lunch time hour and tastier lunch options.

They advise us to be involved in high school, but it is often very difficult to do with the fees put on everything. As teenagers struggling to get our homework done after a three hour practice, we have a negative amount of time to get a job, hence a source of income. Therefore inflicting on us fees to simply join a sport or club is outrageous and costs somewhere from 25-75 dollars. Not to mention all the other costs that come along with being in it.

They have refused to give us a track. This causes our track and field team to not only be at a disadvantage during the season, but promotes injuries - because running on pavement is painful and causes shin splints. We have asked, begged, and reasoned with the school board. What did they tell us? We can paint lines on the parking lot. We have tried to get a real track; drastic measures now need to be taken.

They have told us that our grade is up to us, yet they don't seem to stand by their words concerning that policy.

For we can not go on our phones during class. If we know what is going on and are passing the class, it is not bad to listen to music or scroll through something such as Pinterest during a lecture or extra work time when all assignments are completed.

For we are restricted the privilege to sleep during class. Work time is provided occasionally to get things done. However, if someone is so tired they can't get anything done anyway, let them sleep! Naps are important.

For they punish and scold us for not studying or doing our homework. Doing this work is a personal choice and honestly doesn't affect anyone but the student themselves.

For when we do our homework for a certain class in a different class, we get in trouble. If a student chooses math homework as a priority over english, then they should be able to do what matters to them when they have the opportunity to do so.

They have not provided classes that sufficiently prepare us for our futures. We might know the quadratic formula, but without Home Economics classes, the student body no longer knows how to do laundry or prepare food. We also are extremely limited to the foreign languages that we are offered. Our ONLY option is Spanish. You would think that with the amount of diversity in our world, we would be given the opportunity to learn a variety of different languages. However, they do require us with a whole year and a half of physical education. This class should be an elective, not required! There is not enough time in our schedules to fit in important classes for our education when we have such frivolous requirements and not an expansive enough amount of electives.

They have piled on extreme amount of stress at the end of every semester with the tests they give us. All seven semester tests are given in only two days. As students, we then have to recall months worth of information for tons of classes. These tests need to be spread out over a longer period of time such as one or two a day. Try remembering what you had for dinner every day for the last year. It would take a lot of writing down and studying, wouldn't it? Now reevaluate the stress of remembering everything in every class for each extremely exhausting test.

They have enforced bullying among the student body by letting the student council force people to go down for homecoming and winter carnival events. Calling at, screaming at, and singling out certain individuals to do something they don't want to do or are uncomfortable doing is not okay. Some people have social anxiety! Do people make someone with a broken leg play a game of football? The teachers and student council are disregarding mental illness as if it doesn't matter. Then they stop and wonder where the stigma of it comes from. However, people should be able to sign up to do these events of their own free will when the time comes. If the participation is then too low, the student council members can do it themselves and provide us with the entertainment.

In every step of this unjust and vexatious scenarios, we have tried to get the situations changed and our voices heard, but still they are muffled by the older generation and those with authority. We have tried to ask permission, and were told our ideas are ignorant. We have tried to tell them what we were doing, but denied support. We have tried to take action, but we have been punished and reprimanded. It is time for a change. We repeat, a change is needed. This change is now a separation, a movement for our voices to be heard.

We, therefore, as the representatives of the teenagers enrolled in Spring Valley High School in the United States of America, publicly declare ourselves free from the chains that the parents, teachers, government, and all authority figures have placed on us thus far. As teens with power, we can have input in homework amounts, rights to privacy, and a say in what is going on in our lives. In support of this declaration, we therefore pledge to friends, classmates, and the country our lives, belongings, and merit.