

The Declaration of Teenage Independence

When in the course of adolescence, there are things that become a battle in daily life. It is time to reform the way our lives have been controlled. We as the Teenagers of Spring Valley High School have encountered many unnecessary difficulties by the greater power above us - known as adults. We give the following reasons in respect of the oppressors who have created these damaging injustices.

We, the Teenagers of Spring Valley High School, hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are equal no matter their age, that they are allowed to construct their life based on the outcomes of decisions they had made independently, and that they are to be trusted to make these decisions even if the those in superior positions (i.e., teachers, adults) believe otherwise. Adults have increasingly thought less of us as time goes by. They do not believe we are capable of tasks we do daily, while still believing that we do not have to do anything because our lives are "easy." They put words and thoughts into our heads altering us to think we don't do anything. It makes it seem that all of our hard work seem worthless. It is time to bring to light all that we do, and change the way our lives are lived. We demand equality. We demand power. We demand trust. Finally, we need change. The change for the Teenagers' life greater good starts now!

Adults have made us powerless. We are forced to sit in class for significant lengths of time in monotonous silence. The Teenagers that we are must ask for things, that in other situations, one wouldn't think of asking about. For example, we need to be given permission to go and use the bathroom. This is not helping us become better adults. Do they believe that making us ask for every little aspect of life is going to help us? The necessity of asking to go to the bathroom is unnecessary for both the student and the teacher. The right of being able to go take care of your personal hygiene matters without asking creates independence for the individual and more confidence in the ability to take care of themselves. Furthermore, it is a waste of time for the teacher as well. It causes unwanted breaks in conversation and unneeded questions. Without these interruptions, we would have a better flow in the classroom.

They have no trust in us. We have the resources and knowledge to know whether or not we'll be attending school, or if we are ill and cannot attend. However, a Teenager is not allowed to make the call to the School Office. Rather again an adult is given this job. While I understand the parent or guardian should know the Teenager isn't at school, there could be another way to notify them such as an email notification to the parent/guardian.

Again, it is certain that we know how we're feeling and are capable of doing so. It should not be necessary to have someone else call you in. We are independent, responsible individuals. We do not need someone else to do a task as simple as this for us.

They have limited our freedom by forbidding us to leave the school campus. If one is succeeding and performing well in their education, they should be allowed to leave the school without supervision. This would include the two free periods throughout the day, lunch and W.I.N. time. Do they not believe if one works hard they should be rewarded? We spend a great quantity of time on the grounds of the school, and it is reasonable to be rewarded for a high performance by being allowed to leave for these minimal amounts of time.

They have created physical education graduation requirements that need to be thought through more thoroughly. We are required to obtain 1.5 credits of physical education courses by the time of high school graduation. We understand the need for this, but believe it should be altered in order for extracurricular sports activities to count towards these credits. Throughout the school day we should be able to fully focus on academic courses, after school at practice is when we apply our physical education knowledge. The time we spend at practice working on skills greatly outweighs the time we would spend in school as a class. Therefore, we should be able to put this practice time towards credits.

They have put unnecessary and excessive stress onto us. Testing is something that needs to be restructured. We get told about the mental health problems that are becoming a larger problem, but the ones who have been telling us this are adding to the problem. Stress can lead to anxiety and other problems, or overall makes an already present issue worse. Semester tests are very unnecessary for education. We understand the need to test our knowledge, but cramming seven tests that include everything one has learned is very unnecessary, inefficient, and ineffective to scale the growth of the individual. Semester tests need to be demolished and replaced with an effective way to test one's knowledge.

They have buried our lives with inconsiderate amounts of homework. We diligently and intently work hard throughout the school week to keep up with the giant workload that is put before us, yet we are still punished into our two vacation days with even more work. Many studies have been done, and the average teenager spends over an hour each day doing and completing their homework. This is on top of the 8 hours of classes, sport practices, and extracurricular activities we manage. We should be allowed a break from the endless work that we do everyday.

They have implemented the dreadful five day school week. If the school week were to be shortened to four days we would be able to enjoy ourselves more. This would result in a more productive time in class as we would be able to work harder and participate more during the four days of class. Teenagers would also be able to take part in other interests they hadn't previously gotten to because of the increase of free time. This will build character along with overall happiness of students. In order for this to occur, the length of the four days would need to increase to account for the lost time.

We have tried to express our feelings, thought, problems, and ideas to those with greater power. We have been vocal. We have not been heard, and we have been disrespected.

We have brought our problems, solutions, ideas, and thoughts to those of the greater power, yet we have not been heard. We are being disrespected and not listened to. We are the next generation, the future, and we demand to have change take place.

We, therefore, the representatives of the Teenagers of Spring Valley High School, ask for our intentions to be carried out, and the problems altered to consider the lives of us teens. We solemnly declare that the teenagers of this high school ought to be heard by the adults and that we be independent and free from the greater power's ways of living and structure. The teenagers of this school have the power and right to conclude peace between others no matter the age difference. We can conduct, evaluate, and carry out solutions to problems, and any other act one adult can perform. And for the support for this Declaration, with a reliance of protection of our freedom, we pledge to each other our lives, our honor, and our word.