

#40-Teenage Declaration of Independence

There comes a time in our lives where it becomes an absolute necessity for us to dissolve the bands that have connected us with one another, and to assume, among the powers of adults, the separate and equal rights to which the laws of the United States and of adulthood entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of all people requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We, the teenagers of Spring Valley High School, hold these truths to be self-evident, that all boys and girls are created equal, that they shall be allowed to make and reform the decisions that can alter their lives. These include freedom, a quality education, and the pursuit of a life where we are no longer treated like children. We have no desire to be under the control of the tyranny of the adults in our lives. We demand equality. We demand more power. And most of all, we demand change. The administration of this institution has misused their powers by committing several offenses. This ends now.

They have discontinued home ec classes, which are important and necessary for us teens in learning practical skills for our daily life as adults. Our parents are able to teach us about all of these things, but I consider that to not be enough for us. Home ec classes have three major components: home management, food and nutrition, and fashion and fabrics. Our parents are able to teach us about things like managing a house through chores and also teach us about eating healthy and preparing meals, but not every household owns a sewing machine. Without home ec classes, not every person is going to be able to learn this skill which people should know how to do, so the next time there's have a piece of clothing that has been ripped we will be able to mend it on our own.

They have set the grade point average requirement for participation in extracurriculars far too low. Seriously, how can a person with a 1.335, a *D+ average*, nearly failing school, be involved in activities? Students should genuinely care about school and performing well in their classes and have a strong commitment to learning before they make the voluntary choice to become involved in sports and other clubs. Because of this, the minimum of a 2.5-3.0 GPA, the equivalent to a B overall, should be a reasonable new beginning point for eligibility for participation in after-school activities.

They have imposed on us a heavy workload by having teachers give us multiple tests in one day to study for. Having to deal with memorizing several sets of information and facts in addition to other commitments we have outside of school are too much for us. Despite what others may believe about multitasking, the whole idea is a myth. According to Chris Adams on thought.com, the human brain is unable to perform two tasks requiring high-level function at once. What actually happens when you think you're multitasking is that you're rapidly switching your

attention between two different tasks, so when we attempt to study several sets of facts at a single time, we are unable to grasp the information. Test dates should be more spread out during the week so that we don't have that extra bit of stress on our brains, especially considering the fact that we are trying to balance school, part-time jobs, and socialization/spending time with our friends.

They have especially given a heavy workload to people who are in three sports during the course of the school year. This really adds on to the already busy lifestyle that we have as teenagers, given the fact that we also have jobs and the desire to spend some time with our friends. Some athletes after their competition do not arrive home until after 10:00 pm, and then have homework and/or tests to study for after that, which can considerably cause a toll on their sleep schedule and thus affect their performance in school. Because of this, those students that are three-sport athletes should have less homework so that they don't have any more stress on them.

They have formatted the dress code as being not very clear as to what students can or cannot wear to school. How would the way a person dress cause a health/safety hazard or a physical hazard or violate the law? It just doesn't make sense. The rules are especially not clear for the girls. One of the rules is that girls are not allowed to wear tops with their shoulders showing. It isn't really that distracting, and no guy is going to get the wrong impression of a girl's shoulder. The school is more concerned about girls' clothing and their manner of dress being distracting to other students more than the importance of them getting a good quality education. The dress code does not clearly and distinctly list anything related to the length of skirts and tank top straps, which were discussed in school in previous years, and therefore requires change as to the way it is written so that it lists the regulations in a more evident way.

They have shortened classes like Health 9 and Financial Literacy down to only a semester's length. These are other important classes with content we need to learn so we are aware of certain types of things for our lives. There's so many things we learn here that are crucial to our understanding of life. The skills we learn in Health even at a younger age still carry on with us into our adult years. Students should be knowledgeable about how to read food labels and know about not just the ingredients of foods, but also the calorie contents in addition to other health facts. These include the importance of exercise, and how to deal with stress and other issues surrounding mental health, and how the reproductive system works. Knowing about how our bodies is an important part of keeping ourselves healthy. These topics, in addition to a wide variety of others, cannot all be explained in such a short amount of time. Financial Literacy also has a grand amount of information that we need as adults, like how to manage a house financially, how to buy a car, and many others. This short length of time is not enough for the vast amount of content these classes have to offer.

They have given us stereotypes that have unfairly defined us as people, as we are more than what others typically perceive of us. First and foremost, individuals in this age group are

generally viewed as being lazy and not caring about others or tasks that need to be done. This is not true, as we are a group of dedicated people who are involved in a variety of community activities such as volunteering, either to help others in need or at a special event. Us teens are heavily involved in a variety of activities both in and out of school, and this stereotype is far from true. Secondly, another generalization of teenagers is that we are obsessed with social media. Yes, we have pretty much grown up around technology and have been using it for the majority of our lifetime, but it's not all we do. We use social media to help helps us stay connected with our friends and family members, and regardless of what people believe about us, we do not completely live our lives around social media.

We therefore, the representatives of the teenagers of Spring Valley High School, in English class assembled, appealing to the administration of the institution for the morality and uprightness of our intentions, do, solemnly publish and declare, that us teens ought to be free and independent people; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the school system and parental control, and that all connection between them is, and ought to be, totally dissolved; and that, as free and independent people, that they have full power to reign over ourselves, to put the laws stated in this article in place, and to do all other acts and things which independent adults may of right do. We are no longer under the control of our adult counterparts. And for the support of this declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, lunch money, and sacred honor.