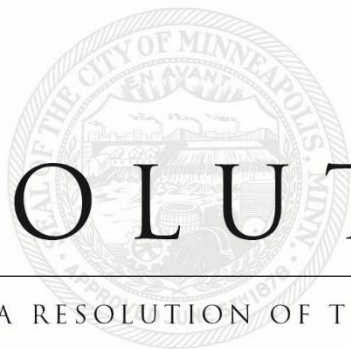




RESOLUTION

CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS - A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

By: Shaffer, Payne, Rainville, Vetaw, Warren, Osman, Stevenson, Chavez, Chughtai, Whiting, Chowdhury, and Palmisano

HONORING THE 250 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

- Whereas: On July 4, 1776, the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, proclaiming: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Those words have echoed across two and a half centuries, inspiring movements for freedom and democracy on every continent and helped give birth to the most enduring experiment in self-governance in human history; and
- Whereas: America stands as history's most ambitious attempt to found a nation not on ethnicity, religion, or hereditary power, but on a single proposition: that all people are created equal and that legitimate government exists only by the consent of the governed; and
- Whereas: We acknowledge with clear eyes that the Declaration was signed by men who held enslaved people in bondage, that the Indigenous nations were not party to its promises, that women were excluded from its protections, and that the distance between the Declaration's ideals and its original application was vast and violent; and
- Whereas: Frederick Douglass named this gap between promise and reality in 1852, when he asked, "What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July?" Generations of abolitionists, suffragists, labor organizers, civil rights activists, and LGBTQ+ rights advocates have spent their lives working to close it; and
- Whereas: The City of Minneapolis stands within Mni Sóta Maŋoce, the land where the waters reflect the skies, the ancestral homeland of the Dakota people, including Bdote, the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, whose relationship to this land is ancient and sovereign, predating the Republic by millennia; and
- Whereas: The history of this country includes the policies of the U.S. government toward indigenous peoples, and the devastating cycle of disease, trade and conquest, including the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, the largest mass execution in American history in Mankato, and the banishment of the Dakota people from Minnesota in 1863, which severed generations of Dakota people from their homeland and sacred places; and
- Whereas: Despite these policies, Native people have never left. Minneapolis is home to one of the densest urban Native American communities in the United States, a living presence whose culture, leadership, and contributions continue to shape this city. The Dakota diaspora, though scattered by exile, is returning to lead a renewed movement of connection and stewardship at sacred sites including Bdote and Owámniyomni, the Dakota name for St. Anthony Falls, work from which the entire community benefits; and
- Whereas: African Americans have contributed immeasurably to the life and conscience of this nation and this city: through centuries of forced labor that built America's wealth, through military service in every war the Republic has fought, through artistic traditions that are some of America's most original cultural gifts to the world, and through a freedom struggle that forced this country to become more fully what it claimed to be. The African American community of Minneapolis, including the historic heart of North Minneapolis and the legacy of Plymouth Avenue, is essential to this city's identity and its ongoing story; and
- Whereas: The United States has always been a nation built by immigrants who fled persecution and hardship seeking the liberties the Declaration proclaimed, from earlier generations who faced suspicion and exclusion before being woven into American life, to the Somali, Hmong, Hispanic, and East African communities who call Minneapolis home today and carry that same story forward; and
- Whereas: The struggle to close the gap between the Declaration's promises and America's practice has produced some of the most remarkable achievements in the history of democratic governance: the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the recognition of marriage equality. Each was hard-won through sacrifice and persistence, and each rested on the conviction that the Declaration's promises could be made real for all; and
- Whereas: Minneapolis has answered that call across generations: from the Teamsters Strike of 1934, to the leadership of Nellie Stone Johnson and Hubert H. Humphrey in the fight for fair employment, to the founding of the American Indian Movement in 1968, to the global reckoning for justice that began here after the murder of George Floyd, to the city's steadfast resistance to Operation Metro Surge; and

- Whereas: The promise of liberty is measured not only by the rights guaranteed in our founding documents, but by whether every child can attend a safe and quality school, every family can find stable housing, every elder can age with dignity, every worker can earn a living wage and share in economic opportunity, and every neighborhood can share equally in the prosperity of this nation, including quality infrastructure and the chance to build generational wealth. That promise is sustained not only by elections, but by the daily work of neighbors, organizers, community leaders, small business owners, and a local government accountable to the people it serves; and
- Whereas: Patriotism in a democracy means more than loyalty to government. It means a shared commitment to self-government, constitutional rights, civic responsibility, pluralism, the rule of law, and the dignity of every person; and
- Whereas: At this moment of national celebration and self-reflection, the fundamental principles of American democracy, including the rule of law, the independence of the courts, the freedom of the press, the protection of the franchise, and the proposition that no person is above the law, face serious pressure. The targeting of immigrants, refugees, and communities of color, the chilling of free expression, and the erosion of checks and balances are precisely the conditions the Declaration's authors wrote to resist; and
- Whereas: The 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence is an occasion for celebration and, more importantly, for steadfast recommitment: to renew the promises made in 1776, to stand against their present erosion, and to carry them forward intact to the next generation;

—NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED—

That the Mayor and City Council do hereby honor the 250th Anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and affirms that its foundational ideals of liberty, equality, and freedom from tyranny belong to no single party or faction, but to the common inheritance of all Americans.

Passed this the Sixteenth Day of July 2026

Elliott Payne, President of the Council

Approved:

Jacob Frey, Mayor

Attest:

Casey Joe Carl, City Clerk