

THE DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS

July 19-20, 1848, Seneca Falls, New York

When, in the course of human events, it become necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume... a position different from that which they have [so far] occupied, [and] to which the laws of nature... entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that [force] them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted; deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

... Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the [time]... to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated... [abuses] on the part of man toward woman, having [established] an absolute [power] over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted...

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the [vote].

He has [forced] her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

... He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

... In [marriage], she is [forced] to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master -- the law giving him power to [take away] her [freedom], and to administer [punishment].

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women -- the law, in all cases... [puts] all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has [taken over] nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but [little pay]. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

... He has created a false public [perception] by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral [wrongdoings] which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man...

He has [tried], in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent... life.

Now, in view of this entire disenfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, ... [and] the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves... oppressed, and [unfairly denied] their most sacred rights, we insist that [women] have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

*Source: Stanton, E. C. (1848). The declaration of sentiments. Fordham University.
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/senecafalls.asp>*