

No. 74-1776

In the
Continental Congress of the United States

PATRIOTS,

Petitioners,

v.

LOYALISTS,

Respondents.

BRIEF FOR PETITIONERS

CHARLES W. STUCKEY

JACK FREITAS

Counsel of Record

Team Number 24347
Greenwich High School
10 Hillside Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

Team Number 24347
Greenwich High School
10 Hillside Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

Should the United Colonies declare independence
from Great Britain?

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SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

The Patriot cause amongst the American colonies is essential for preserving the life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for every living member of the thirteen American colonies, and their posterity.

A sudden increase of attention and call to arms from Great Britain continues to threaten not only the sovereignty that the young American nation once practiced, but also infringes on the ability of each and every citizen to practice their God-given rights.

The King himself, and Great Britain as a whole, have both betrayed the relationship between America and the United Kingdom through their own actions. Americans have lacked true representation in Parliament in spite of Britain's claim of virtual representation. Colonists have voiced their outrage over heavy taxation, the seizing of American ships, and a lack of representation, through written and public measures. Yet the Crown has responded through violence, discounting any ideas that do not support full, unabashed submittance as foolish and improper. Any attempt to quell the bloodshed that had transpired between both sides has been disregarded and Britain has only responded through further measures of violence meant to indiscriminately suppress the public's attempt at promoting change.

Since the colonies and their citizens have been deprived of the pleasures of self-governance and

undeniable natural rights granted by God, and any attempt to seek reconciliation over such tension has been ignored and marginalized, it stands to reason that the only course of action for Americans must be to seek independence from the tyranny of Great Britain.

ARGUMENT

I. The American Colonies experienced significant infringements upon their foundational, God-given rights at the hands of the British Crown.

In order to gain a full understanding of the Patriot cause and its benefits for the colonies, one must first define what the Patriot cause truly encompasses. The Patriot cause has taken many shapes and sizes throughout the history of the colonies. While some may have viewed themselves as part of the Patriot cause, they were nowhere near as drastic in their actions or demonstrative in their language. A delegate by the name of Mr. John Dickinson, for instance. Though he viewed himself as a man that would rightfully stand up for the rights of Englishmen, he was about as distant from the thought of independence from Britain as a loyalist. One the first of July in 1776, before the vote on an official Declaration, he publicly stated his discourse through his essay "Arguments Against the Independence of the Colonies." He stated specifically, "Reconciliation is impossible without declaring independence, now that you have reached the stage you have."

Therefore, for these interests and purposes which shall be stated in and throughout this document, the Patriot cause strictly adheres to the cause meant as

total and full independence from Great Britain. It entails a two-pronged solution to the many issues raised by British oppression on the colonists. First, the cause shall allow a total separation between the strict tyranny employed by the British Crown among its colonies; it shall therefore work towards ending the repercussions caused by its abuse of power. Secondly, the Patriot cause is not limited merely towards complete independence. Leaders and colonists alike recognize a much broader opportunity of creating a new nation that runs under Enlightenment ideas, including natural rights. It allows the cause to not only entail the removal of one tyrant, but also creates measures to protect against another.

A. The British Crown violated the rights of its own subjects, under its standing legal code.

To say fully, clearly, and brazenly, the British Crown has repeatedly exceeded its rights as leader of its American colonies. In recent decades, Great Britain has become the greatest source of discourse in the colonies, plaguing the individual affairs of each one. Once thought of as a mutually beneficial relationship between the American and British sides respectively, the Crown has abused its power indefinitely, and has detrimentally

impacted the way of life, and even the lives themselves, of nearly every American citizen.

Perhaps one may deem it only fair to begin at the root of such discourse in order to gain a full picture of just the full amount of tyranny that Britain has and continues to exhibit. By the end of 1763, the British and Colonists alike united under a common enemy of the French power that had sparked conflict throughout the frontier. In the aftermath of the war, the two sides were perhaps more united than ever for the simple fact that they had fought hand in hand, and under the same cause.

It was all the more surprising, therefore, for one to see Britain's sudden and forceful grasp on the British colonies. Despite a formerly understood measure of salutary neglect between both sides, Britain suddenly seemed to have a growing desire to stake their claim on the American front and began to infringe on the individual liberties expressed by the colonists. Moreover, Britain began to impose a handful of unprecedented taxes across the American colonies. One of these such taxes, perhaps the most well-known and equally detrimental, was the Stamp Act. It was a strenuous tax that deeply taxed the colonists "under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs and successors." Specifically, the tax actually encompassed "every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper." In turn, this Act taxed a wide variety of objects commonly used by the colonists, including legal documents, newspapers and even smaller household objects such as playing cards.

A main source of conflict originates from such a tax for a very specific reason. The issue is not actually just the tax, to be clear. To say that Great Britain should not have the power to levy any taxes whatsoever is like saying a bee should not have the power to pollinate; it's simply improbable. An English writer by the name of Samuel Johnson stated in a pamphlet that "the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring from all its subjects such contributions as are necessary to the public safety or public prosperity" (1775). One must realize Johnson does not even fully identify as a loyalist, but rather believes that it is indeed the right of a larger power to enact taxation objectively.

The issue itself arises through a lack of representation. While any leading force of a nation can and should have the power to levy taxes to a certain extent, it is simply not probable to do so when a certain group is not justly accounted for. Great Britain has claimed that the American colonies are a unique situation, namely that they have "virtual representation." Multiple clear issues arrive with this sentiment. Firstly, America neither had the ability to vote, nor even a direct seat in Parliament. As John Dickinson referenced in his series of essays titled "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania" (1767-1768), the colonies lacked any semblance of full representation, and therefore should not be taxed as a territory with full representation. He himself stated, "This tax may be a small sum, but the danger is in the precedent that it sets for future laws". Moreover, Americans should not simply allow for this taxation to transpire and pay for them wholeheartedly, as it sets a poor precedent. If the colonies are

continuously denied specific seats or voting rights in the House of Commons, yet Parliament continues to levy more burdensome taxes, a slippery slope arises; Britain may begin to believe that they do indeed have nonexistent powers and are well within their moral grounds to tax their colonies, which is simply not true. Secondly, even if the thirteen American colonies were justly accounted for in Parliament by some longstanding British representatives, it would still be completely unfeasible. One can not effectively represent a population that exists 3000 miles away. Frankly, the cities of Boston and New York are at the height of a market revolution and are changing every day. Written letters delivered across the sea, delayed by the time it takes to travel, simply cannot adequately represent an expansive, ever-changing population. Finally, one must remember the longstanding history of self-representation within the British colonies themselves. Americans have been well aware of the hardships that come between two countries that are blocked by 3000 miles of open sea since they founded Jamestown, and have therefore created their own legislative systems - in the case of Virginia, it was the House of Burgesses. In fact, Patrick Henry stated in the 1765 Virginia Resolves on the Stamp Act that "his Majesty's liege People of this most ancient Colony have uninterruptedly enjoyed the Right of being thus governed by their own assembly in the Article of their Taxes and internal Police and that the same hath never been forfeited or any other Way given up but hath been constantly recognized by the Kings of People of Great Britain." A sudden wave of taxation after such a longstanding period of self-governance by the colonists and for the colonists raised several questions. The overall consensus was that America had already

practiced self-governance for a reason - Great Britain alone could not adequately represent the populace of even just one colony. With that in mind, how could Britain forgo the decade-long precedent of self-governance in America by taxing its people without any sort of formal consent in its own governmental system?

In short, it couldn't. Therefore, this taxation by the British is neither just, nor legally backed, and is one of the Crown's numerous examples of an overstep of power. While Britain may attempt to defend this legislation as within their moral grounds due to it assisting a common good for Englishmen, it still does not solve the problem of a lack of representation of the people. As stated, the excessive nature of taxation, such as the Stamp Act, would not be such a problem if America had equal representation as any other member of British Parliament. In fact, it was this excessive nature that really began to push Americans over the edge and signal that mischief was occurring. However, as John Dickinson stated, an even greater problem arises when the people of a colony are content enough with an unjust tax from Britain and therefore do nothing to combat it. It would signal to the English that they indeed had the power to freely tax their colonies as authoritarian as they so pleased, thus perpetuating colonial society into one that is less free and more of a servant for the will of King George. Therefore, staying silent was simply not a viable option for colonists; they chose to combat these taxes in order to demonstrate that they are not the mere plaything of Britain. After all, one must not forget that the colonies are not meager extensions of British conquest, but truly formidable powerhouses in their own

right. In the words of Samuel Adams in "The Rights of the Colonists" (1772): "The inhabitants of this country in all probability in a few years will be more numerous, than those of Great Britain and Ireland together." Following this logic, one can understand that Americans would not simply stay silent against the unjust nature of "taxation without representation."

Clearly, direct Parliamentary seats wouldn't be an option due to Great Britain's strict unwillingness to expand representation. Therefore, Americans took the only next, logical step one could take in the situation of tyranny, that being proposed legislation. In response to the taxation sparked by the Stamp Act, activists such as Patrick Henry spoke on behalf of the Colonies in order to rally support to amend this wrongdoing. In his resolution on the Stamp Act in 1772, he stated "that the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and sole exclusive Right & Power to lay Taxes & Impositions upon the Inhabitants of this Colony." In essence, Henry made the argument not only to spread his distaste towards Britain's overreach of power, but also to facilitate a united populace towards a movement. As it turns out, that was exactly the outcome that would eventually transpire. In October of 1765, nine of the thirteen American colonies met in New York city in order to have an official, collective dissent towards the Stamp Act and its malefactions. Since Americans had not been given their own, official parliamentary seat, these delegates took matters into their own hands and drafted their own legislation. They also drafted several resolutions, most notably "that it is inseparably essential to the freedom of a people, and the undoubted right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them, but with

their own consent, given personally, or by their representatives.” These American colonies represent a certain civic virtue, that during times of crisis and strife, the public can come together to propose amends to the problem. If anything, this Congress proved two points: one, that the colonies took the most logical and legislative course of action against underrepresentation in an attempt to secure their rights as Englishmen; two, that this ability to come together remarkably easily is further evidence of an already longstanding history of self-governance. Remarkably, this Congress briefly made an impact on Great Britain’s rule. On March 18 of 1766, the Crown released an order, the repeal of the Stamp Act. In regard to the Act, Parliament promised that “the above-mentioned Act, and the several matters and things therein contained, shall be, and is and are hereby repealed and made void to all intents and purposes whatsoever.” The resolution may have appeased some colonists, yet they would eventually learn to realize that it was only a temporary bandage to an ever-growing, tyrannical wound.

Although the Stamp Act may have convinced some that the colonies would finally regain some of its former representation by their own will through the popular sovereignty of colonial assemblies, the Crown would eventually end up going back on its promise. Years after the Stamp Act on March 10, 1773, Britain passed yet another, ever-infamous tax on its people: the Tea Act. This Act was meant to give England an unjust monopoly on the tea sales in America: “the whole of the duties of customs payable upon the importation of such teas.” It also forced colonists to exclusively buy tea

directly from the British East India Company, and thus pay a tax on that tea. Yet fundamentally, the worst part of this taxation could not be found within the lines themselves of the tea act, but rather the implications that it put for the bond between Britain and America: Great Britain had once again betrayed America and gone against a further promise that was already in place. As mentioned, it first betrayed America with its first levy of taxes without representation and broke the understood agreement of individualistic autonomy practiced from Boston to Savannah. This most recent tax, however, further stretched the relations between both of the countries by disregarding the precedent set by the Stamp Act Congress. When America had gone the correct course in proposing representation through a completely legal and justifiable way, Britain just spat in their face and ignored the progress they had made. Such a betrayal as this sent a message to Americans that Britain was disloyal and could not be fully trusted. Such a fear of the deceitfulness of England was certainly not aided by the Boston Massacre of 1770, one of the most dreadful moments in the history of the American colonies thus far. The calamity caused by those regulars in Boston, who willingly fired onto innocents in a crowd during a protest, made Americans all the more wrathful and increasingly outraged with the British and their actions. This massacre, along with the Tea Act, was a large catalyst for triggering so many Americans to join a Patriotic cause.

When efforts to achieve Parliamentary representation in the House of Commons had failed, Colonists were forced to defer to alternative measures to

deal with the issues at hand. With a growing fear of marginalization, the colonists took the next best step they could in maintaining any semblance of representation by Britain: public protest. Considering that the previously attempted legislation through the Stamp Act fell flat, Americans sought to send a more direct and understood message about their rights as Englishmen; on December 16 of 1773, the colonists certainly did just that. In the silent surroundings of nightfall, groups of colonists - dressed as Indians - approached British ships in Boston Harbor. Making a stand, the Patriots boarded the ships and valiantly launched hundreds of boxes of British tea into Boston Harbor, rendering it useless. Now, some may discount this act as an inept revolt, made by poorly-enlightened rustics. On the contrary, the Boston Tea Party, as it began to be called, represented a much more fundamental desire of dissent towards the Crown's policies. In truth, the tea party demonstrates a much more physical reaction and outbreak, yet as stated, it was the only logical course of action to take after the legislative process had failed. Actually, the tea party was one of the most well-orchestrated expressions of assembly seen at that point in American history; the colonists who participated possessed a hyper-specific cause, and took action not so indiscriminately as some may believe. A common virtue among those men who boarded those ships that night was undoubtedly present. Disregarding the repercussions that may result after such an act, the Patriotic cause sent a crystal clear message to England, not out of spite or utter-hatred alone, but of necessity in maintaining the foundational rights that had just recently been withdrawn. After all, the broadside poem entitled "Tea, Destroyed by Indians"

in 1773 made it fundamentally understandable that: “Our liberty, and life is now invaded, And Freedom’s brightest charms are darkly shaded.”

With the tea dumped, the colonists waited in anticipation to see if any attention would finally be given from Britain; it did that, and more. What followed was the most egregious threat to the American way of life since the seven years. In response to colonists attempting to exercise their rights as Englishmen to raise attention, Great Britain levied a brutal list of taxes. The coercive Acts, nicknamed the Intolerable Acts by the Patriots, were passed. These were meant to punish the colonists by causing more detriment than had ever been exuded by the British. One such of these taxes included the Quartering Act, which required colonists to house, feed and tend to the needs of British regulars at any given time, furthering the capabilities of the British army arriving on American soil to further inflict oppression. In a strictly objective perspective, however, the two clearly most grievous parts of this new wave of punishment were undisputable: the Boston Port Act and the Massachusetts Government Act. To begin with the first and follow with the latter, the Boston Port Act shut down Boston Harbor, severing a major economic artery for the Colony of Massachusetts. It specifically addressed “if such ship or vessel shall not depart accordingly, within six hours after notice for that purpose given by such person as aforesaid, such ship or vessel... shall be forfeited and lost, whether bulk shall have been broken or not.” Moreover, the Boston Port Act effectively created a tight naval blockade on the harbor and prevented commercial shipping for the duration of

the blockade. One must understand that as a Northeastern colony, Massachusetts was dependent on the sea in a myriad of ways, ranging from ship carpenters to foreign traders, all who rely so heavily on the port to function. Without Boston Port fully operational, a tremendous amount of money was lost which left the economy of Boston, and by effect the economy of Massachusetts, in shambles. It does not take a scholar of economics to understand the severe malefactions that hurt not only the industries, but the common man as well from this royal overreach of power. By shutting down Boston Harbor, the Crown truly entered the midst of acting as a tyrannical power, depriving America from operating a port that was rightfully theirs. It once again further stretched the once tight-knit relationship between both nations. Even more destructive than the Boston Port Act, however, was the Massachusetts Government Act of 1774, which completely altered the unique identity found within the colonial way of life. This act took even greater drastic measures towards keeping the colonies in submission, as it revoked the colonies' original 1691 charter and instated a new form of government in an attempt to better serve the crown: "so much of the charter, granted by their majesties King William and Queen Mary to the inhabitants of the said province of the Massachusetts Bay, in New England...to the time and manner of electing the assistants or counsellors for the said province, be revoked, and is hereby revoked and made void and of none effect." This act violated the rights of the citizens of Massachusetts without a shred of regard for their well-being. Mentioned above previously, the colonies had always participated in their own form of self-governance, through the policy of salutary neglect,

and was in no way under the direct and sole rule of the crown. The colonies had been like this since their inception, and to deprive them of this ability to manage themselves is to declare the form of governance that had created great prosperity to be ineffective and insufficient, in favor of an iron fist an ocean away. This created a situation where Britain's true tyranny and lack of care for the decades long precedence of colonial governments comes in center stage. One must remember one crucial fact: these acts were formed in the wake of the Boston Tea Party, which in and of itself was not worth striking down as severely as was done by England. The colonists practiced the rights of assembly - rights that Englishmen in the colonies had always had access to - in order to inform Britain of their outrage. Yet in response, Britain disregarded the entire messaging of the public protest and only further entrenched the colonies in trouble.

While Independence may now seem quite obvious, it was certainly not always this case. The Colonies truly did everything in their power to maintain any semblance of a relationship with Great Britain. Colonists attempted to perpetuate a cause not of independence but of amending their relations with Great Britain. Given the Americans lacked any form of representation in the House of Commons, they used their established local legislatures to deal with their plights, but to no avail, as the Crown refused to yield. Since the legislative path was unfruitful, Americans took to the streets and to the harbors, this time to voice their outrage through public protest. Yet when even that failed, as a product of the Intolerable Acts crackdown on

civilian life, only one course of action remains to truly secure a man's fundamental rights: a war for independence. As citizens began coining Patrick Henry's term "Give me liberty or Give me Death" they had finally reached a breaking point with the Crown's tyranny. After repeated broken promises, a tyrannical overreach of power, and a lack of care or acknowledgment of the people, Americans made the only logical conclusion, abdicating themselves from a power that never truly understood what it was to be an American.

B. The Patriot cause allows and inspires Americans to strive towards natural rights philosophy, and to eventually promote a society under such Enlightenment principles.

The noble cause of independence not only allows the American colonies to separate from the tyrannous oppression of the British Empire, but also perpetuates the ability to create the society envisioned by the philosophical school of natural rights. Considering that the first segment of reasons for independence has been addressed - that independence was a necessity due to foreign oppression - it is appropriate to address the second portion of the benefits in siding with the Patriot cause. Moreover, another reason to propose independence from the most tyrannous Great Britain arises when considering the loss of natural, human rights of the colonists. Upon examination, one can understand that while a portion of the Patriot cause

exists out of necessity in protecting against a British invasion, there are also perspectives beyond simply supporting national security. Independence from Great Britain would allow the citizens of a new American nation to exhibit basic human rights, which had become popularized by the European Enlightenment. Citizens and colonial leaders alike have repeatedly claimed that their rights have been in jeopardy ever since the first taxation reached the shore. However, with the creation of a completely new nation, born out of squalor but nonetheless moving towards higher sophistication, leaders have the most unique opportunity in creating a new society. Through a new American nation, the future leaders and generations can take these natural rights that the colonists have claimed, and implement them within a system of government, and even expand them over time. Thus, a Patriotic movement towards independence fosters the ability to not only secure the blessings of liberty to citizens at the moment of revolution, but also for their posterity and future generations. This desire towards achieving intangible and altogether philosophical ideologies comes not out of a forced necessity, but rather a desire. It's an experiment, as one may dare to say, to capitalize on such a unique opportunity during the course of human events, through attempting to facilitate a fundamentally new and freedom-filled way of life.

Since the founding of the American colonies, the introduction of new Enlightenment ideas has always been part of it for one reason or another. The colonies

practiced self-governance in each individual territory, and as such the colonies themselves could be seen as breeding grounds for knowledge and gubernatorial innovation. The spread of such innovative ways to imagine a society function truly began its odyssey towards worldwide renown in 1689, when the English Bill of Rights was first written and later signed. This list of rights was and continues to be compelling as it took one of, if not the most powerful men in all of Europe, the King of England, and put an official check on his abilities. Several philosophies that the colonists would later promote and abide under made an appearance in this document, such as the rule of law: "That the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal." In effect, this guaranteed that the King had to act within the just constraints of the law, and was now much more limited in his power. Perhaps equally as intriguing is the introduction of the following line, stating that "it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning are illegal." The Bill of Rights enshrined numerous ideas that have since been transgressed in the American colonies, such as guaranteed petition, and thus public dissent, against acts of the King. Its peculiarity lies in the fact that the Crown was once thought to be uncheckable, and freely disregarded privileges such as habeas corpus at its own discretion. With this binding document, however, the King was - at least on paper - bound by the constraints of the law, and thus seen to exist more as a true man of the people. Now, whether the Crown and Parliament alike fully followed through on these

promises is a separate question entirely. Yet the fundamental principle remains regardless: that this document represented one of the first times power was taken away from the monarch. Just one year later, English Enlightenment thinker John Locke released his written works composing the “Second Treatise of Government”, which has directly inspired many Patriots in their cause for freedom. Any ideas that may have been alluded to within the English Bill of Rights are no doubt apparent within Locke’s works. Locke blatantly mentions the idea that citizens of a government exist in a social contract, in which the governing power is meant to represent the will and voice of the people. Equally, if people feel as though a monarch fails at his leadership position of the people, Locke boldly confesses his belief in toppling over those bad regimes. In regard to such government oppression, he states that “Where-ever law ends, tyranny begins” and “whosoever in authority exceeds the power given him by the law, and makes use of the force he has under his command, to compass that upon the subject, which the law allows not, ceases in that to be a magistrate.” What Locke is arguing for is the fundamental idea that a larger, governmental power ought to be a servant of the people, and the people themselves should be the ones running the country. In addition, and perhaps most famously, Locke spoke about his three ideals in regard to the ideas of natural rights, which are guaranteed to everyone: “life, liberty, and property.” The social contract, popular sovereignty and these ideas of natural, human rights hold significance to the Patriot cause because they were passed down over time and ended up within numerous pamphlets, written works

and essays supporting a Patriotic movement towards independence. Moreover, the Patriot cause is not merely about gaining independence, but also to secure the rights that thinkers such as Locke proclaimed were granted by God. Guaranteeing fundamental rights and privileges for all men equally is of unprecedented nature, and has encouraged others to share their own thoughts and beliefs as Americans.

In the years that followed, the colonists would eventually use these principles in their own written work. After outrage at a lack of representation in Parliament, and the burdensome taxation caused by Great Britain, Americans would employ these sharp ideas of liberty in order to contrast the even sharper blade of oppression. The Pennsylvania delegate James Wilson published an essay entitled "Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority" (1774). Within it, he mentions natural rights abundantly as well as the idea of the colonies and the British Crown having a unique social contract, which is stretching the limits of what was once thought feasible: "all lawful government is founded on the consent of those who are subject to it: such consent was given with a view to ensure and to increase the happiness of the governed." This type of language is groundbreaking in its unabashed dissent against Great Britain. Two years prior, in 1772, Patriot Samuel Adams released an influential piece of work as well, titled "The Rights of the Colonists." Similar to Wilson's work, Adams addresses the direct rights possessed by the colonists themselves, rather than of all Englishmen or all mankind like previous

writers. In accordance with John Locke's original ideas in his *Second Treatise of Government*, Adams makes a strong comparison involving natural rights, claiming that they encompass "First. a Right to Life; Secondly to Liberty; thirdly to Property." Many Americans were well-versed in the language of John Locke and several other, well-trained philosophers. The use of such philosophers within their language provides another layer of credibility to their own statements. A familiarity with the Enlightenment Age also allows intellectual writers such as Adams to sort through a wide variety of ideas to make their own conclusions. In the same source, Adams makes the claim that "every natural Right not expressly given up or from the nature of a Social Compact necessarily ceded remains." One must understand that prior to the passing of the Stamp Act in the 1760s, America had largely enjoined an unadulterated period of self-reliance through a method known as "salutary neglect," in which the Colonies were left to manage themselves under the premise of obedience to London. This period fostered more self-governance among the colonists, and thus allowed for more ideologies concerning liberty and equality to not only be tested, but to prosper as well. In response to the Stamp Act, which seemed to begin to threaten some of the rights the colonists had obtained, Patrick Henry referenced this longstanding period of self-reliance in "Virginia Resolves on the Stamp Act (1765)." Henry stated "That his Majesty's liege People of this most ancient Colony have uninterruptedly enjoyed the Right of being thus governed by their own assembly in the Article of their Taxes." Furthermore, in the very next paragraph,

Henry added that specifically, only the General Assembly of the colony possesses the “only and sole exclusive Right & Power to lay Taxes & Impositions upon the Inhabitants of this Colony.” Henry and Adams were both well-versed in classical philosophy, leading the charge towards a more intellectual and academic revolution, rather than one of vitriol or brute force. It also reflects the understanding that the Colonies did indeed enjoy a time of more relaxed affairs and out of the clutches of Great Britain, free to incorporate more of popular sovereignty into their everyday life. However, the Colonists lacked any enshrined and enumerated rights, save for a few obscure details in certain colonial governments, unlike their comrades in England. The colonies, for all their strengths during salutary neglect, had not fully secured those rights in any sort of binding, collective document. The Patriot cause intends to rectify this problem, through both guaranteeing a wider range of rights to the citizens of the colonies, and also securing those rights accordingly. In July of 1774, Virginian delegate Thomas Jefferson released an essay titled “A Summary View of the Rights of British America.” This work entails just the idea of guaranteeing rights to the citizens of each colony. He proclaimed that “the God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time: the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them,” again referencing the natural rights philosophy found within John Locke’s writing. Considering the context of when this was written takes place shortly after the passing of the coercive acts, Jefferson was understandably angry at the overreach of British sovereignty on the colonies, and expressed his anger over tyranny

clearly. In regard to the Crown, Jefferson stated “he [he King] is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine of government erected for their use, and consequently subject to their superintendance.” The diminishment and reduction of the King’s power by Jefferson is most akin to the ideology of a social contract, as Jefferson seems to argue that King George does not, and should not, have nearly as much power as he thinks he does. On March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death” address leaned upon his disillusionment with the current system of government, and his desire to achieve liberty more in tune with Enlightenment philosophy, to rally the people of America towards a more equal union with the British, if any at all. Moreover, he stated that if they wished to be free, then “we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight!” This speech, in and of itself, serves to link the two parts of the Patriot cause. For one, it calls for more liberty and rights to be given to all citizens of the American colonies, yet also calls for independence against Britain. In essence, it is taking the individual desire of separation from Britain, and changing the narrative to make the revolution become a social revolution. It seems that Patrick Henry, along with other Patriotic delegates such as John and Samuel Adams wanted wholeheartedly to achieve natural rights for all men, and sought the war of independence as a gateway to reach that goal; a golden opportunity.

Even so, a fundamental question still remains

after all is said and done: why are achieving the rights spoken so profoundly by the colonists necessary to the Patriot cause? The answer lies within the greater failure of the Crown's policies. After the atrocities of the Boston Massacre and its ensuing martial law consequent to the Tea Party, the Patriots had developed a sense of paranoia at what they were witnessing. An abuse of power by the British monarch should never have happened under the English Bill of Rights, yet nonetheless occurred, and any enshrined rights for the people had been cast aside. Henceforth, the Colonists will not be content enough in creating a society that is just simply devoid of Britain. There must be the assurance that another tyrannical power will never have the ability to raise the power again. Many Patriots sought to discuss the natural rights of man and how they ought to be protected in pamphlets, essays and other works to contrast the authoritarian system of England.

Such pamphlets, in fact, paved the way for the document with the most undisputed significance in America and the epitome of natural rights philosophy: the Declaration of Independence. Ratified on July 2, 1776, the Declaration was and remains the greatest unifying factor among the Patriots. The document most notably establishes that "all men are created equally" and that they are "endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Locke's ideas on human rights, –albeit slightly edited to change "property" to "pursuit of happiness," as if to represent the certain uniqueness that may entail with an American nation– continuously establish the

American people's deserved right to be free, and live with their fundamental rights protected by a government of the common man.

Supporting the Patriot cause has been shifted to now encompass the support of equal, God-given rights for all people. Not only do the Patriots seek to object to the tyranny seen by volatile British action, they hope to do what Britain never could: create a functioning society that is reliant on the people themselves and truly does provide liberty and equal representation. Every citizen of any land, colony or not, deserves these rights that have been unjustly deprived from the American people, and this obscenity is from what the Patriot cause derives itself. A cause founded within the ideal of protecting all of mankind from the injustice of a government with the power to destroy whatever it sees fit is one which any man can regard as morally correct, and their recommended course of action is without question the correct one.

II. The British Crown repeatedly rejected numerous attempts at reconciliation from the Colonies and chose to keep a war of subjugation ongoing.

Ever since the first of the Intolerable Acts spread the dangerous arm of British tyranny across the American Colonies, the just men of America put forth their very best efforts to ensure that these infringements upon their rights do not devolve into a war. Attempts at de-escalation were incredibly common. These can be divided into the pre-war and post-war periods, with the divisor being the Battle of Concord and the start of armed conflict between the English and the Americans.

It can be universally agreed that, if an actor directly initiates and then further escalates a conflict, while disregarding any real attempt at peace, that the fault of said conflict is placed upon them. This idea can be proven to effect, and causation for this war across the Colonies is undoubtedly placed upon the Crown of England. In the case of the English and the Americans, this is more than just a reason for a total separation from foreign rule.

A. American proposals to rectify the British infractions upon their own liberties were met with violence.

The idea of a war between the British colonists and their subjects across the Atlantic was not always a certainty. In fact, the initial reaction to many infringements upon civil liberties was cordial and approached through proper legal channels, rather than disruption or violence. The foremost example, both in practicality and chronological order, is the reaction across the Colonies to the Stamp Act.

Upon the passage of the Stamp Act, oppressively regulating the usage of a good as simple and widespread in use as paper, Americans across the colonies took to the law as a way to rectify the situation. In Virginia, Patrick Henry took to the House of Burgesses and proposed his Virginia Resolves on the Stamp Act (hereafter referred to as the Virginia Resolves) a series of five resolutions to be voted on by the legislature. These resolutions, rather than calling for conflict or rebellion from the British Crown, instead attempted to make peaceable resolutions to the brewing tension. Included within them were provisions for the colony of Virginia and its House of Burgesses to “have the only and sole exclusive Right & Power to lay Taxes & Impositions upon the Inhabitants of this Colony,” and that an attempt towards putting said power into the hands of another body would have an inherent tendency to “destroy British as well as American freedom.” It also

included a statement declaring that the people of Virginia, by the law of the royal charters of King James I, were “intituled [sic] to the Privileges, Liberties and Immunities” held by natural born subjects of England, as if they too were equal to those born in the “Realm of England.”

Virginia was not alone in taking to a legal route in response to the Stamp Act. After May’s meeting of the House of Burgesses, the Continental Congress was called in October of 1765 to form what has been termed the “Stamp Act Congress” with the main goal of amending tensions with the colonial government. Made up of delegates from nine of the colonies, they came to their own conclusions in the form of fourteen resolutions, later entitled the Declaration of Rights and Grievances. This Declaration summarized what the colonists believed they, as citizens of the British Empire, were entitled to, in terms of treatment by the government. Alongside echoing the Virginia Resolves’ persistence on the idea of equality with the British people, introducing the concept that the colonists owed “the same allegiance” to the Crown as “citizens born within the Realm,” broader concepts were also introduced, such as requesting the right to a trial by jury. The Declaration of Rights and Grievances also made widespread the concept of representative taxation, wherein only the duly elected representatives of a population may levy taxes upon them.

The common thread amongst these two measures is that the American colonists are, by the very nature of their being, equal to the natural-born citizens of England, and by such, ought to retain the same rights as them. These rights, being trampled upon by a government thousands of miles away across an entire ocean, are fundamental to the continued safety of the Americans as a people, and their protection ought not to be stifled at the whims of a monarch with no ties to the land, nor by a parliament unelected by the people it taxes.

While these legal measures of dealing with the injustices imposed on the colonists achieved certain short-term success, through the repetition of the Stamp Act on the First of May, 1766, the British Crown continued its actions against the rights of the Colonists with the passage of the Tea Act in 1773. The Tea Act, similar to the Stamp Act preceding it, imposed unreasonable taxes unto a population with no power to overturn them. Hoping for a similar result as before, the American colonists turned to legal channels to deal with the issue, with the Philadelphia Resolutions being passed in October, pushing harder on the Crown to repeal their actions. Harkening to the prior issues of taxation without representation, the Philadelphia Resolutions specified that the tax on tea was intended to “render assemblies useless” as well as “introduce... slavery” upon the loyal subjects of the Crown in the Colonies. However, despite this egregious breach and “violent attack” of American liberties, the British Crown could not be reasoned into accepting a cordial peace,

leaving the Patriots with only one acceptable outcome: civil disobedience.

As a result of the British government refusing to honor their own legal code and end the “slavery” imposed upon their colonies, many Patriotic civilians rose up and dumped 3 full containers of Bohea tea into the Boston Harbor. This disruption, while civil in its nature and heroic in its intent, was treated by London as an act of vile sedition, and their ensuing actions would illustrate that the Crown had no intent of easing tensions.

In the wake of the Boston Tea Party, four Acts were passed in the House of Commons between April and June of 1774, turning the policy of salutary neglect into an afterthought and initiating martial law over the mere act of spilling some tea in defense of crucial liberties. These four acts, being in chronological order the Boston Port Act, the Massachusetts Government Act, the Administration of Justice Act, and the Quartering Act, signaled the point of no return for the British. Rather than take the sensible route of stepping back and allowing the Americans, who had more than adequately managed themselves for the previous century and a half, the British continued this path of escalation. Their idea of “justice” through the Administration of Justice Act, for example, allowed for British officers accused of capital crime to be moved to England for trial, all but guaranteeing acquittal, if not an outright pardon. With British troops now stationed throughout the Colonies, the economic bloodline of Massachusetts being severed

with the military occupation of Boston, and the direct removal of the Massachusetts state government that had existed since its original royal charter, the situation had escalated from a mild legal dispute to unyielding despotism at the hands of King George.

Despite these gross violations of the fundamental rights of the Colonists, they still sought a peaceable truce, clearly proving their intent for a pacifistic end to this brewing conflict. With the state government of Massachusetts replaced, Suffolk County took to making their own resolutions, taking on the name of the Suffolk Resolves. However, even in the face of such egregious violations by His Majesty King George III, the very first resolution is an affirmation that he is the sovereign over the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and to “cheerfully acknowledge” that he is their “rightful sovereign,” and that the covenant upon which the English colonies were based upon is reliant upon their submission. Said affirmation, however, was then succeeded by the confirmation that this covenant also must be upheld by the Crown, and that it is the foremost duty of man, owed directly to God himself, that the “maintenance, defense, and preservation” of the civil liberties that were fought and bled for by generations prior be an utmost priority. This compact proposed by the Suffolk Resolves was fulfilled wholeheartedly by the people of America, and put the onus upon the British to uphold their end of the bargain, which the Intolerable Acts simply failed to do. But rather than directly propose a war, the Suffolk Resolves simply concluded that the repeal of these unjust tyrannies and the return of

local government would be the easiest path for both sides towards reconciliation. However, it was not entirely peaceful. Emergency measures were put in place, in the case of further British provocation, to ensure that the people of Suffolk would not be left helpless. These included weekly drilling, keeping men prepared for war, and the command to, in response to potential capture of their own leaders, reciprocate and hold British officers in “safe custody” until an exchange could be mediated. While these measures did explain what to do in the case of conflict, they were by no means aggressive, and merely an instance of the provocation by the British government and the measures that Patriots were forced to adopt for the sake of mere survival in the face of a murderous despot.

The Continental Congress, in agreement with these terms proposed by the people of Suffolk, composed their own resolutions. These tended to be more aggressive but still allowed clear time for the British to retract their crimes. Through the Head of Grievances and Rights, an itemized list of complaints against the British government was issued. It starts with listing 11 British statutes that they seek to repeal, followed by their own demands, made up of reasonable requests such as the end to unjust systems of taxation and law that leave the American people unrepresented, and that all crimes committed on American soil be tried in America rather than being shipped to stand before a foreign jury. Ultimately, the way for the British to end this tension is to simply revoke the 11 Acts and restore the

original colonial governments. There was no demand for independence, as it was not necessary in the moment, if the British simply upheld their end of the covenant mentioned in the Suffolk Resolves.

The final act of peace in the lead-up to the Battles of Lexington and Concord, and its consequent war, was an attempt at rapprochement with the British General Gage. After the fortification of Boston Neck and encampments of British soldiers being established across the city of Boston, the denizens of Massachusetts requested that the General move his soldiers out of the city and speak a word of reason to His Majesty the King in order to prevent the outbreak of any conflict. However, in a final act of defiance to any form of peaceful conclusion, General Gage retorted with a fiery indictment of the Patriot cause, claiming that there is no issue with his actions or those of his troops. He also commends the colonial attempt at reconciliation, but claims that it is in vain without multiple unreasonable reparations, including both paying for and making a memorial of the tea tossed in the Boston Harbor, both to be sent to the King himself. General Gage's refutation of factual evidence of his nation's misdeeds, and his consequent, ludicrous demands made of his opponents, clearly signalled that there was no return from this point for the Americans without sacrificing the rights that so many had already lost their lives for. These tensions would, eventually, culminate in the Battles of Lexington and Concord, and the start of this present conflict we see our nation and people embroiled in today.

B. American attempts at peace and détente after the war had begun were met with hostility and conflict.

The story behind this conflict and the conundrum we find ourselves in, whether or not to fight for independence or remain subjects to a foreign dictator, shifts dramatically after the Battle of Concord. In the immediate wake of the blood shed just northwest of Boston, many Patriots scrambled to still find some way forward without forcing any further war and unnecessary butchery at the hands of our British oppressors.

Foremost amongst these efforts was the Declaration of Causes, the Continental Congress' method of explaining the existence of the Continental Army and its justification for fighting. Even this Declaration, though, still explains the idea that independence is a very last resort, and that this war is primarily out of defense, until "hostilities shall cease on the part of the Aggressors." Yet again, just as had happened before the war began, the onus was placed upon King George III to end the war, and the ability to put such carnage to a finish without losing control over his subjects was firmly within his grasp. The need for independence can be placed, without doubt, on the King's refusal to back down on the ownership of the Colonies in America, and furthermore, his lack of ability to see what was coming.

The Declaration was not alone in this pattern, and was joined by the Olive Branch Petition. Proposed by pacifist John Dickinson, the Petition stood as the final attempt to make true peace with the British Crown, choosing to avoid any direct blame on the King himself, instead redirecting it to the Ministers around him in his cabinet and the House of Commons. Dickinson's Petition was special in its kow-tow towards a foreign monarch to whom he would be fully justified in owing no further allegiance to. But, out of a love for his own homeland, kin and countrymen, Dickinson proposed a meager solution of simply returning to the prior system of 1756, a reasonable system that had succeeded in its treatment of the colonists. Even when war had broken out, the brave Patriots of America continued their valiant efforts to make peace with the oppressors.

There was, however, at least one attempt at peace from the British. Not originating from King George III himself, but rather from Lord Frederick North, Duke of Guilford, Home Secretary and Prime Minister of Great Britain (henceforth referred to as Lord North, or simply North.) North, the original author of many of the Intolerable Acts, acted very much in-line with his past efforts at dealing with the Patriots. After having delegated the entirety of the war thus far to his subordinates, Lord North drafted

a proposal for peace and sent it to the Continental Congress. The plan was half-hearted, simply ordering the individual assemblies within each colony to allow London to dictate their taxation policy. This “plan” lacked any real ambition for an equal, lasting peace, creating the penultimate signal that the British lacked any true sympathy for the plight of the Patriots under their heel. However, there still needed to be one final act, one ultimate defiance of all methods of peace to make independence the only viable solution.

Like Caesar crossing the Rubicon, the King’s Proclamation of Rebellion left our brethren with no choice but to separate from this foreign tyrant. With an offer of peace and submission, only requesting a scant compensation in the form of a return to the original system under which the Colonies were run, King George III had a path to peace in order to prevent this bloody war from further wrecking through American homes. The Proclamation of Rebellion was in response to all three of the previous month’s efforts at peace, but specifically directed towards the Olive Branch Petition, which he directly claimed was written by “dangerous and ill-designing men” and proclaiming that the Patriots had been “proceeded to an open and avowed Rebellion, by arraying themselves in hostile Manner to withstand the Execution of the Law, and traitorously preparing, ordering, and levying War against Us.” King George, who openly refused to read Dickinson’s humble approach towards peace, instead summarily sentenced the entirety of the American colonies under

charges of sedition, for the simple crime of defending their own liberties. Rather than take the sensible path, the path of wisdom and of sane men, to minimize the death and catastrophe of a war based solely on man's innate right to be free, and accept a reasonable peace by retracting his own encroachments on his subjects liberty. The Crown chose, in the face of multiple moral and practical solutions, to keep the yoke of a foreign despot upon them. In King George's utter rebuke of peace for the sake of soothing his own ego at the expense of the very liberties promised to the American people by our God, he has forsaken those whom he has been 'divinely' commanded to protect. From this, it can be concluded that, in the rejection of all proposals of peace and reconciliation in favor of tyranny and bloodshed, that the British Crown no longer possesses the right to control these American lands.

CONCLUSION

As was once written by John Locke in his Second Treatise of Government, any law-maker, democratic or despotic, who “endeavors... to reduce [the people] to slavery under arbitrary power, puts themselves into a state of war with the people.” Such a quote, originating from a philosopher of the same land as the English Crown that now represses us and presses the people of America into slavery, represents the breadth of cruelties and crimes to which the Englishman has subjected his dutiful Colonists to.

These crimes number far too many to be named and listed in any organized fashion, but can be grouped succinctly into various groups. From excess taxation, a theft finding its roots in the very depths of human greed and lust for power, to the abolition of any true process of law in the Colonies, insofar as subjecting the people of America to martial law. The regional assemblies, from the Royal Charter of Massachusetts to the House of Burgesses in Virginia, were deprived of their power in favor of military governors and armed streets. The due process of law and fair trial, of those involved both in the repression of the people and those Patriots who valiantly stood against such, has been done away with in its entirety. The American people, as a unified society stretching beyond city walls or state lines to encompass the entire continent, have been beaten and suppressed time and time again, with their offers of reconciliation and rapprochement rejected in favor of

cold-blooded slaughter of the innocent in their own streets and homes. These atrocities committed against a people who did nothing wrong, merely believing that they ought to hold the rights that were bestowed upon them by our Creator, have placed the men and women, innocent and guilty, sinner and saint, into a state of collective slavery.

In the event of such a state of slavery, it was concluded by Locke himself that the legislators responsible for such tyranny, in this case the House of Commons and the King himself, would “forefit the power the people had put into their hands,” and said government has all obedience from its people “absolved.” However, contrary to the principles of such an important philosopher to their own land, the Crown has refused to grant absolution to its wronged subjects, who have suffered so dreadfully under its wrath. This refusal of compromise or any form of peace outside of subjecting the innocent to even further slavery, has spawned a war of catastrophic consequence so far and with no end within sight. This conflict, and the slavery to which it has become tied to, will As such, the only route left for the American people to secure their God-given rights and continue to prosper as a society is to declare absolute and total independence from the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. STUCKEY

Team Number 24347
Greenwich High School
10 Hillside Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

JACK FREITAS

Counsel of Record
Team Number 24347
Greenwich High School
10 Hillside Road
Greenwich, CT 06830

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