

Date: January 8, 2025



Utah State Board of Education

**Resolution Commemorating America's 250th Birthday
and Her Guiding Foundational Principles**

WHEREAS, celebrating 250 years since America's founding, the Utah State Board of Education acknowledges and remembers the guiding and foundational principles and truths that have established and given birth to America's freedom and success as a nation.

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence boldly and clearly identified the political philosophy of America when it stated, "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," acknowledging and enshrining into our nation's founding document the foundational truth that our rights come from God, the Creator.

WHEREAS, the core political beliefs of the founding fathers included: ordered liberty; equality; natural rights, including defense of self, community, and nation; freedom of speech and press; and the free exercise of religion;

WHEREAS, the founding fathers recognized historical events and texts—such as the Ten Commandments, the Mosaic Law, the New Testament, and the experiences of the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, the English Common Law, the Magna Carta, and the English Bill of Rights—as a basis for American law and public policy;

WHEREAS, America was founded as a Constitutional Republic, establishing separation of powers and federalism under a written constitution, and thereby avoiding the fatal tendencies of a democracy.

WHEREAS, in moments of hardships and success, America's people have historically turned to God, the giver of their rights, to give thanks and seek protection and guidance.

WHEREAS, at Cape Henry Landing in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, Rev. Robert Hunt and the original Jamestown settlers erected a cross and had a prayer ceremony dedicating the new land to the Lord in what is considered the first English Christian worship service in America.

WHEREAS, as depicted in the US Capitol Rotunda Painting, the Pilgrims gathered around an open Bible, where they learned principles like republican government, religious liberty, and equality that characterize America.

WHEREAS, the Pilgrims hosted the first Thanksgiving celebration in America in 1621, to give thanks to God for bringing them native friends and allies, and helping any of them survive the first winter with hopes that they might prevail again in the coming winter, establishing a national practice upheld today.

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Contact Person and Email: Board Members Boggess, Green, and Longacre

This draft is for consideration during the Standards and Assessment Committee mtg

Rule/Statute:



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WHEREAS, the First Great Awakening (1730-1770), led by leaders such as George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and Samuel Copper, helped provide the foundation upon which American Independence was later erected.

WHEREAS, in the first-ever Congress in 1774, at the recommendation of Samuel Adams, the Rev. Jacob Duche was asked to open the body in prayer, reading from the scriptures.

WHEREAS, since America's founding, government-issued calls to prayer have been integral to public proceedings, including 15 Continental Congress calls during America's War for Independence for days of fasting, humiliation, prayer, and days of thanksgiving, a practice continued by presidents, governors, and legislatures.

WHEREAS, on April 30, 1789, President George Washington's inauguration preparations were made by Congress, with the cooperative help of a body of fourteen clergy, including ministers from different denominations and a Rabbi. Religious activities at the inauguration included—Bible-based oath, prayers, and worship services—with one-third of his Inaugural Address reflecting God's providential role, many inauguration traditions were continued by subsequent presidents.

WHEREAS, beginning in 1800, weekly church services were held in the US Capitol building, where Thomas Jefferson faithfully attended services throughout his eight years of his presidency and other presidents, Senators, and Congressmen likewise went to church at the Capitol.

WHEREAS, the Second Great Awakening, in the early 19th century, led by figures like Harry Hoosier, Lemuel Haynes, Andrew Bryan, Francis Asbury, and Charles Finney, inspired reforms including abolition, temperance, and women's rights.

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln's Call for a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer on March 30, 1863, focused on correcting the spiritual condition of the American people in the midst of the nation tearing itself apart in the Civil War; Lincoln called on the people to examine their own relationship with God and His Scriptures, and conform their lives to that standard.

WHEREAS, on February 12, 1865, Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, the first Black American to speak in Congress, preached a sermon on the floor of Congress to celebrate the 13th Amendment's passage, enacted two weeks earlier to abolish slavery.

WHEREAS, from 1774 to the present, the government has produced military Bibles; more than sixty-seven versions of the Bibles and Armed Forces Prayer Books have been officially distributed to soldiers, sailors, and airmen as a source of spiritual strength and encouragement, including in every conflict from the American War for Independence to the War on Terror.

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WHEREAS, President Franklin Roosevelt, when he announced the active invasion on D-Day, June 6, 1944, during World War II, led the American people in a 6-minute prayer on behalf of the safety of the troops who, at that very moment, were unloading and under fire; he also prayed for the success of the operation.

WHEREAS, Dwight Eisenhower started the National Prayer Breakfast and added “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance, added “In God We Trust” to all currency, made “In God We Trust” the National Motto, and facilitated the addition of a Prayer Room in the US Capitol.

WHEREAS, in 1963, Martin Luther King Jr., jailed in Birmingham for defying a policy banning unpermitted gatherings, penned his Letter From a Birmingham Jail, defending non-violent action against injustice with historical precedents from church leaders, reinforcing the moral and religious duty to confront wrong;

WHEREAS, America's history from the past 250 years has been marked by the prevalence of faith and Divine Providence, and her history affirms a clear and firm reliance on God and the Bible.

NOW, **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that this Utah State Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to the principles upheld in the Declaration of Independence that we are endowed by the Creator with inalienable rights, and it is with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence that we mutually pledge together our lives and fortunes and sacred honor in preservation of America and her next 250 years.

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