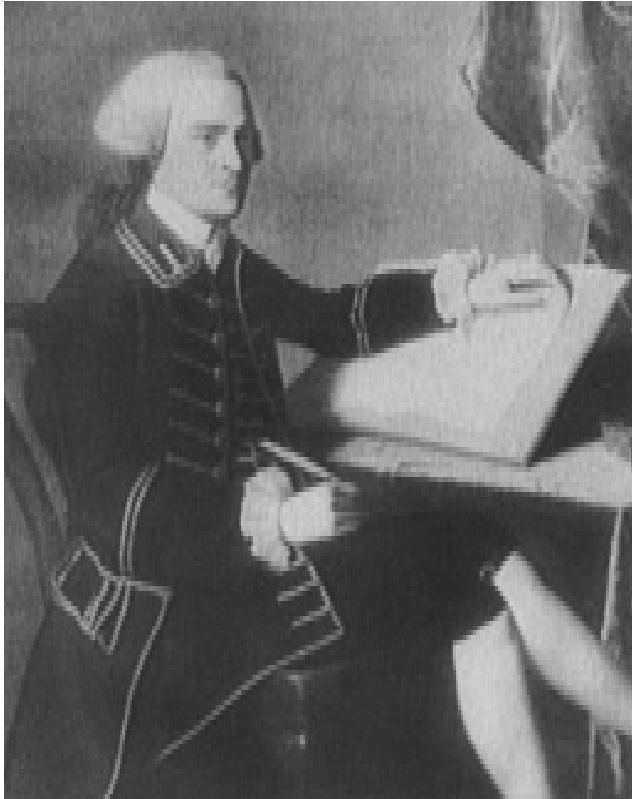


John Hancock's letter to British authorities - July 6, 1776



“we are able, and to trust the load to that Being [God] who controls both Causes and Events, so as to bring about his own Determination.”

Editors Note: John Hancock's cover letter to the Declaration of Independence that was sent to British authorities.

Philadelphia

July 6th, 1776.

Sir,

Altho it is not possible to foresee the Consequences of human Actions, yet it is nonetheless a Duty we owe ourselves and Posterity in all our public Counsels, to decide in the best Manner we are able, and to trust the load to that Being who controls both Causes and Events, so as to bring about his own Determination.

Impressed with this Sentiment, & at the same Time fully convinced that our Affairs may take a more favourable Turn, the Congress have judged it necessary to dissolve all Connection between Great Britain and the American Colonies, and to declare them free and independent States; as you will perceive by the enclosed Declaration, which I am directed to transmit to you, and to request you will have it proclaimed in your Colony, in the Way you shall think most proper.

The important Consequences to the American States from this Declaration of Independence considered as the Ground and Foundation of a future Government, will naturally suggest the

Propriety of having it proclaimed in such a Manner as that the People may be universally informed of it.

The Services in the Northern Department requiring a Number of Ship Carpenters to build Vessels for the Defense of the Lakes, I am directed by Congress to request you will order fifty to be immediately engaged, and sail to General Schuyler at Albany for that Purpose. You will naturally endeavour to engage them on the best Terms. I enclose to you the Terms on which the Marine Committee have engaged a Number for the same Business. But should you not be able to procure them at the same Rate, it is the Desire of Congress, you should exceed it, rather than the Carpenters should not be sent.

I have the Honour to be, Sir, your most h[um]ble Ser[vant]

John Hancock, President

The enclosed to be given

please to order to be Deliver'd him.

Hon[oura]ble Govr. Cooke.¹

Endnotes:

1. John Hancock's letter to British authorities on the Declaration of Independence, July 6, 1776, <http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/history/hancocktext.html>

Photo, courtesy of the Library of Congress, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov>

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