



## A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM GOVERNMENT INCOMPETENCE

by [destor23](#) 7/3/2012 - 1:11 pm

Hey, guess what? I just read *The Declaration of Independence* for the first time in a very long time. It's short! It's part of a little pocket guide, combined with the Constitution, published by the CATO Institute, given to me a few years ago and I figured, what the heck, it's that time of year.

And what really struck me about it, now that I'm not in seventh grade is what a cautious document it is, how reasonable it is and how so many of the complaints don't have to do with taxation or acts of war and physical tyranny (many do, of course, but those get all the press) and how much of it has to do with basic complaints about governmental incompetence and what we'd now call gridlock. For example, the King of Great Britain has:

"...refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public Good."

"He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing Importance..."

"He has refused to pass other Laws for the Accommodation of large Districts of People..."

"He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly Firmness his Invasions on the Rights of the People.

He has refused for a long Time, after such Dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the Dangers of Invasion from without and Convulsions within."

This is about the government abdicating its responsibility to govern. This is a document written by people who might well have kept their king if their king were a solution to their problems and not an impediment to finding solutions. This is a group of people who would look at our current Senate filibuster, whereby no law can be passed or even fruitfully debated without a 60 vote majority as utterly insane.

I love the idea, by the way, that the legislative powers of the people don't just go away when you dissolve the legislature. Collectively, people always have those powers and if you take away a form of organization, they will still hold onto those powers and will still use them, perhaps just less effectively.

Of course, things get oversimplified with time. I half expected to pick this thing up and read some screed about taxes and the requirement to by health insurance. Yes, there's a jaunty passage about the King's attempts to economically isolate the colonies, rendering them dependent on the Crown. Yes, there is the complaint that the King has been "imposing Taxes without our consent." But the vast majority of the document is about the King's utter incompetence and broken system of government.

Basically, reading the declaration has convinced me that if today's Tea Partiers piled into a DeLorean and shot back to Boston that their spiritual predecessors would toss them into the Harbor.

Happy Fourth, Dag.