



Written by [Robin Kinderman](#) on July 7, 2016

Wake Up Generation Y! We CAN Make a Difference!

Wake up Generation Y! We CAN make a difference! (We're the same age as many who signed the Declaration on Independence.)

Generation Y — those of us born between 1980 and 1994, myself included, are a unique bunch. The older half of us were the last generation to have a childhood without the Internet, smart phones, iPads, etc. We connected with our friends and peers through telephone, handwritten letters, and — gasp! — face-to-face conversation. And we were the first generation to discover the Internet and its ever-expanding abilities — first e-mails (instant messaging?!), then public chat rooms where you could meet people from all over the country, then sales venues such as Craigslist and Ebay, and now social networking and sharing sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and countless others.



Generation Y understands how insanely awesome this is. You can find nearly *anything* on the Internet and connect with almost *anybody*. You can find information on any subject you can imagine. You are no longer limited to the library, or hopes of connecting with your coworker's friend's brother, to make new cabinets look old.

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So there's no excuse for why you are not involved in the welfare of your country. You cannot say, "I don't know how to get involved" or "I don't know where to find out" or "I'm not smart enough" — and you definitely can't say "I'm too young."

The "Generation Y" of 240 years ago included a group of men who got together for a few days to hash out a plan for a new, independent country. At the end of a hot week in July, they produced the Declaration of Independence — a document that not only announced our separation from Britain, but laid the foundation for how the new United States of America was going to operate. Of the 56 men who produced and signed the Declaration of Independence, four were in their 20s, and 10 were 30-35.

One of the youngest, Thomas Lynch, age 26, had been attending law school in England when he first heard rumors of colonial discontent. He decided to get involved; he returned home to South Carolina and attended his first town meeting in Charleston when he was 23. From there he rose up the ranks and obtained a seat in Congress in 1776.

The other youngest, Edward Rutledge, represented South Carolina in the Continental Congress, and was actually rather hesitant about cutting ties with Britain. He also disagreed with his colleagues on the



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inclusion of a paragraph addressing the illegality of slavery in the colonies, at one point walking out of a meeting. He eventually won his argument and signed the Declaration at the age of 26.

George Walton grew up in Virginia, and while apprenticing to be a carpenter at the age of 14, his master forbade him to read — so George did so by candlelight. As soon as his apprenticeship was over, he moved to Georgia and began schooling to be a lawyer. He became well-known and respected, and in 1776, at the age of 27, was elected to represent Georgia in the Continental Congress.

Thomas Heyward, Jr., like Thomas Lynch, was studying law in England when he realized how much Britain disliked the colonies, even experiencing discrimination himself because he was from the colonies. When he returned home, he became very politically involved and outspoken, gaining the respect of his colleagues. In 1775, at the age of 28, he was elected to the General Congress to represent South Carolina, where he later “joyfully voted for and signed the Declaration of Independence.” (*Lives of the Signers* by B.J. Lossing)

Benjamin Rush graduated from Princeton University at the age of 16 with a degree in medicine. His intellect and winning personality made him very well-known and respected, and he was elected to the General Congress to represent Pennsylvania in 1775, at 30 years old. He declined at first, but later agreed when several other Pennsylvania delegates refused to vote for independence and withdrew their seats.

Elbridge Gerry went to school at Harvard, and according to *Lives of the Signers*, “entered into commercial pursuits, amassed a handsome fortune, and by his intelligence and good nature, won for himself the esteem of his fellow citizens.” He was elected to the General Court of Rhode Island in 1773, and then to the Continental Congress in '76, where he signed the Declaration at the age of 31.

Thomas Jefferson was 22 when he attended a speech by Patrick Henry against the Stamp Act. It was this speech that spurred him into political action. Four years later he was elected to the Virginia Legislature, and six years after that, to the Continental Congress. The following year, 1776, he was chosen to be a member of the committee that would write the Declaration of Independence. He was soon appointed chairman, and the other members requested that he be the one to write it. He did, and after very few changes, it was adopted on July 4, 1776. He was 33.

William Hooper, upon graduating from Harvard with a law degree, felt there were too many lawyers in Massachusetts and moved to North Carolina, where he preceded to make a reputation for himself. There he became involved in politics and assisted the governor. He was elected to the Provincial Assembly of North Carolina in 1773, then to the Continental Congress in '74. He was “peculiarly obnoxious to the British,” according to *Lives of the Signers*, and signed the Declaration at the age of 34.

Arthur Middleton was born in South Carolina but was sent to England to attend school at the age of 12. After graduating from Cambridge at 22, he spent two years traveling throughout Europe, becoming especially interested in the fine arts. When he returned home in 1773, the rumblings of revolution were afoot, and he joined one of the safety committees of South Carolina. From there, he became very outspoken, and was elected to the General Congress in '76, at the age of 34.

James Wilson was a teacher from Scotland, who soon took up the practice of law after immigrating to America in 1766. He was very adamant about his love for America, and became very popular among his fellow patriots. In 1774, he was elected to the Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania, and in 1775, was chosen to be a delegate to the General Congress. He was 34 when he voted for and signed the Declaration.



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Samuel Chase graduated from college at 18 and became a practicing lawyer at 22. Like Thomas Jefferson, the Stamp Act roused him into political action, and he became one of the first “Sons of Liberty,” making his stance known by assaulting stamp offices and destroying stamps. Through these actions he became very popular among the public, and was elected to the Continental Congress in 1774 at the age of 34.

William Paca went to college with Samuel Chase, and also became a practicing lawyer at a very early age. He became a member of the Provincial Assembly of Maryland at age 21, and spoke out against the Stamp Act alongside Chase. He was very active in getting people to form county conventions to express their grievances. He was appointed to the Continental Congress in '74, and signed the Declaration at the age of 35.

John Penn, unlike his Declaration colleagues, did not have an extensive education. He spent roughly three years in a county common school as a child, and gained the rest of his knowledge through a cousin’s personal library. He taught himself enough that he was able to attend college, and passed the bar at the age of 21. In 1774, he moved to North Carolina, became politically involved, and was elected to the Continental Congress in '75. He “voted for the Declaration of Independence, and joyfully placed his sign manual to the parchment” at the age of 35.

Now, I’m sure you’re reading this, thinking, “Those were different times, people grew up faster, the culture was different, everyone was into politics, it was easier to be involved, yatta yatta yatta.”

You’re right on some things — people did grow up faster, because life was often shorter. But that is not an excuse. It is time for you to get involved. Voting for the president is not enough. You need to educate yourself on what is really going on around you, what is happening to your city, your state, your country.

It was written into the 10th Amendment of the Bill of Rights, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.” What this means is that any powers or rights *not* given to the government in the Constitution are the province of the states or the people. For example, it doesn’t say anywhere in the Constitution that smoking shall be prohibited in certain establishments; therefore, this becomes an issue for the states to deal with.

As you can probably guess, our government has disregarded this amendment on many, many, *many* occasions. It is up to us, the states — the people — to get it back under control. Too many people think our government can do whatever it wants because it is the government — NO! We are not a dictatorship! Our Founding Fathers wanted a limited government. We should want it, too: Whenever a government obtains the power to do good, it also has the power to do bad, and unscrupulous people will always use that power to their benefit, and to the detriment of the common person. The result is the corruption, cronyism, waste, and inefficiency that we see in government every day. Centralized governmental power always devolves that way — always has, always will. The Founders bestowed upon the people a government that was limited to the powers given it, a government told what it could and couldn’t do, and established a system of checks and balances. They wished to prevent the emergence of an elected monarch or dictator. It is up to us to restore this country to what it was meant to be, or see it get even worse.

At this point, I’m guessing your next rebuttal is “But it’s complicated! I don’t even know where to start.” Well, I have good news — I’m here to help you with that.

Your first step is to gain a better understanding of what this country is supposed to be. I highly



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recommend watching [Overview of America](#) and reading "[A Republic, If You Can Keep It.](#)" After that, I suggest you check out [Restoring the Rights of the States](#), review *The New American* articles listed under American Principles in the Opinion/Reviews tab, and get yourself a pocket-sized Declaration of Independence & Constitution.

Once you have read and watched these items, you will have (the beginnings of) a better understanding of what is going wrong in this country. Next, check out the JBS [Issues Page](#) to see how the government is outside its constitutional bounds. As I said, this is only the beginning, but now your eyes have been opened. Please, I implore you — learn more. Educate yourself. What is happening to our country does affect you. You're not too young to make a difference. You have the energy, the tools, and the tenacity to get out there and get involved!

You merely need the desire.

"I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but I can still do something, and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do." — Edward Everett Hale

Photo by [Ed Yourdon](#)

*Ages of the signers found at

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2013/08/how_old_were_the_founding_father_the_leaders_of_the_american_revolution.html

All information of the Founding Fathers taken from the book *Lives of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence*



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