



# NEWS RELEASE

## Utah State Board of Education

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### **Utah State Board of Education Adopts Resolution Commemorating America's 250th Anniversary**

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has adopted a resolution to commemorate the United States' 250th anniversary, reaffirming its commitment to the foundational principles of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. The resolution was read by the Board during the March 12, 2026 board meeting.

In conjunction with this historical commemoration, USBE has invited Utah students to participate in the *America250 Utah Essay and Art Contest*, which launched earlier this year. Students in grades 5, 8, and 9-12 are encouraged to submit original essays or visual artwork responding to the question: "What does America mean to you?" Participants are asked to base their work on what America means to them by exploring the ideas in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

"America's story is still being written, and today's students are part of that story," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Molly Hart. "As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary, we hope this contest encourages students across Utah to explore the principles of freedom and self-government and to share what those ideals mean to them."

To support this initiative, a significant scholarship program has been established. Six top winners, one essayist and one artist from each grade level, will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship. Additionally, 130 students will be awarded \$250 scholarships for their

contributions. Contest submissions are due by March 30, 2026. Award recipients will be announced in June 2026. For full contest rules, submission details, and resources, please visit [tinyurl.com/America250Utah](http://tinyurl.com/America250Utah).

### ***Board Resolution Commemorating America's 250th Anniversary***

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 thus a people cannot remain free without a thorough knowledge of these principles; and

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", and that government's sole legitimate purpose is to protect those pre-existing rights; the American system is built upon the idea that governments derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed"; and

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 the press; and the free exercise of religion;

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

WHEREAS, the stability of our Republic relies upon self-governance, a principle requiring that citizens govern their own conduct according to moral virtue and internal conscience — a "moral and religious people" being, as the Founders noted, the only people capable of sustaining a free nation; and

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; and

WHEREAS, historical primary sources — including the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 — record that "religion, morality, and knowledge" are "necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind," and therefore must be encouraged through our schools; and

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.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, public education plays a vital role in preparing students to be informed, responsible, and engaged citizens who are capable of understanding the nation's founding principles and history, respecting rights of conscience, and participating thoughtfully in civic responsibilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Utah State Board of Education reaffirms its commitment to the principles upheld in the Declaration of Independence and that public education strengthens understanding of America's constitutional heritage and prepares students to sustain the principles of liberty, equality before the law, and self-government for the nation's next 250 years.

Adopted February 5, 2026.

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