

1 **Declaration of Sentiments: Women’s Grievances Against Men**

2 Women’s Rights Convention: Seneca Falls, New York

3 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott?

4 July 19, 1848

5

6 When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the
7 family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that
8 which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of
9 nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that
10 they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

strongly urge or
force

11 We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal;
12 that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among
13 these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights
14 governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the
15 governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it
16 is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon
17 the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and
18 organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their
19 safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long
20 established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all
21 experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are
22 sufferable, than to right themselves, by abolishing the forms to which they are
23 accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably
24 the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their
25 duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future
26 security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government,
27 and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to
28 which they are entitled.

wisdom

wrongful seizures
of power by force

29 The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part
30 of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute
31 tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

32 He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

voting process

33 He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

34 He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded
35 men - both natives and foreigners.

36 Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby
37 leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on
38 all sides.

<p>39 He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, <u>civily dead</u>.</p> <p>40 He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.</p> <p>41 He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes, 42 with <u>impunity</u>, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the 43 covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he 44 becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master - the law giving him power to 45 deprive her of her liberty, and to administer <u>chastisement</u>.</p> <p>46 He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of 47 divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be 48 given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women - the law, in all cases, 49 going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into 50 his hands.</p> <p>51 After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of 52 property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when 53 her property can be made profitable to it.</p> <p>54 He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is 55 permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty <u>remuneration</u>.</p> <p>56 He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers 57 most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not 58 known.</p> <p>59 He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education - all colleges 60 being closed against her.</p> <p>61 He allows her in Church as well as State, but a <u>subordinate</u> position, claiming 62 <u>Apostolic</u> authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and with some exceptions, 63 from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.</p> <p>64 He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of 65 morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women 66 from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.</p> <p>67 He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign 68 for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.</p> <p>69 He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own 70 powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and 71 <u>abject</u> life.</p> <p>72 Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, 73 their social and religious <u>degradation</u>, - in view of the unjust laws above mentioned,</p>	<p>non-existent</p> <p>exemption from punishment</p> <p>punishment</p> <p>pay</p> <p>lower-ranking holy</p> <p>unfortunate or miserable</p> <p>a lowly condition</p>
---	--

74 and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently
75 deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to
76 all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

77 In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of
78 misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every
79 instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents,
80 circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist
81 the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by
82 a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

phamplets