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Celebrating Our Country's Independence

While we celebrate our nation's independence this Fourth of July with parades, barbeques, and other festivities, I'd like to remind citizens of the historical document our Founding Fathers created to give us the freedoms that we hold today.

The Declaration of Independence, drafted mainly by Thomas Jefferson in June 1776, represents America's beliefs of absolute freedom. Adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence is the official document that declared the 13 colonies were to be independent from Great Britain. Included in the declaration were a list of colonial grievances against King George III and the assertion of certain moral or *unalienable* rights.

Five key members of the Continental Congress were chosen to create a document that would forever change the course of our nation's history. Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and Roger Sherman of Connecticut, were charged with preparing a declaration to justify why the colonies wanted to break ties with the "mother country."

Jefferson, only thirty-three years old at the time, was selected to write the original declaration. After he drafted six versions, Jefferson sent his final draft to Congress. The body worked on the draft for three days and delivered a compromise, adopting the document by unanimous vote with all the colonies represented. John Hancock, president of Congress, then signed the document, making its journey from concept to reality complete.

Today, the original Declaration of Independence is exhibited in the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom in Washington, D.C., where it is maintained under pristine archival conditions.

Because of this great document, our country was able to govern as a republic instead of ruled by monarchy and hereditary rule. And since this time, our country has developed into a democracy that allows citizens to select individuals to represent them as a whole, and gives us the freedoms and liberties we hold so dearly.

Without the work of our Founding Fathers, I would not have the privilege to serve the people of the 28th Senatorial District — representing their voices and beliefs in the Missouri Senate. This Fourth of July, I hope you recognize the work of our Founding Fathers and pay tribute to the liberty and freedoms we have today. However you spend your Independence Day, I wish you a happy and safe holiday.

If you have any questions about this column or other legislative matter, please feel free to contact me at (573) 751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.

