

Declaration of Sentiments Explained a little

“The Declaration of Sentiments” is a document, outlining the rights that American women should be entitled to as citizens, that emerged from the [Seneca Falls Convention](#) in [New York](#) in July 1848. Three days before the convention, [feminists Lucretia Mott](#), Martha C. Wright, [Elizabeth Cady Stanton](#), and Mary Ann McClintock met to assemble the agenda for the meeting along with the speeches that would be made. The Declaration of [Sentiments](#), written primarily by Stanton, was based on the [Declaration of Independence](#) to parallel the struggles of the [Founding Fathers](#) with those of the [women’s movement](#). As one of the first statements of the political and social repression of American women, the Declaration of Sentiments met with significant hostility upon its publication and, with the Seneca Falls Convention, marked the start of the women’s rights movement in the [United States](#).

The Declaration of Sentiments begins by asserting the equality of all men and women and [reiterates](#) that both genders are endowed with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It argues that women are oppressed by the government and the [patriarchal](#) society of which they are a part. The text then lists 16 facts illustrating the extent of this oppression, including the lack of women’s [suffrage](#), participation, and representation in the government; women’s lack of property rights in marriage; inequality in [divorce](#) law; and inequality in education and employment opportunities. The document insists that women be viewed as full citizens of the United States and be granted all the same rights and privileges that were granted to men.

The Declaration of Sentiments was read by Stanton at the Seneca Falls Convention on July 20 and was followed by the passage of 12 resolutions relating to women’s rights. Interestingly, the only resolution that did not pass unanimously was that which called for [women’s suffrage](#), as some were concerned that the issue was too controversial and would hurt their efforts for equality in other arenas. Sixty-eight women and 32 men, including [abolitionist Frederick Douglass](#), signed the Declaration of Sentiments, although many eventually withdrew their names because of the intense ridicule and [criticism](#) they received after the document was made public.