

**Message on the Anniversary of Patrick Henry's "Give Me Liberty, or Give Me Death!" Speech**

*March 23, 2026*

Two hundred and fifty-one years ago, as the 13 Colonies stood on the precipice of revolution, the great Patrick Henry rose to address the Second Virginia Convention to declare words that have echoed throughout the halls of history: "Give me liberty, or give me death!" Henry's epic speech rang out at a decisive hour in our Nation's journey, stirring his fellow Virginians to cast off the heavy hand of British tyranny and take up arms in pursuit of the righteous cause of American independence.

In the spring of 1775, more than 100 of Virginia's most devoted patriots gathered at Henrico Parish Church united by a solemn purpose: to debate Henry's resolutions to arm their local militias and organize a defense of their homes against the British Empire. As tensions between colonists and their imperial rulers continued to rise, many delegates still harbored great doubts as to whether armed conflict was the best course of action.

On March 23, 1775, the third day of the convention, Patrick Henry heroically answered that doubt, "If we wish to be free . . . we must fight!" His oration ended in a call for freedom that would become a rallying cry for all Americans in every age: "I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!" His resolutions passed, and America took a step toward forging her own destiny. Little more than 1 month later, the first shots of the Revolutionary War rang out at Lexington and Concord.

Henry's defiant stand ignited a movement that would later give birth to our Nation. As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of American independence, we are reminded that the blessings we inherit were secured by those early patriots who refused to surrender the cause of freedom at its most perilous hour. Their bravery built a Republic grounded in the conviction that liberty is a sacred, God-given right, and it must always be safeguarded by a resolute people ready and willing to fight and die for it.

Through the words of Patrick Henry, the earliest Americans found their voice and realized the strength of their resolve. More than two and a half centuries later, his words still call us to live with bold and faithful vision, to cherish the freedom entrusted to our care, and to carry forward the work of preserving the proud heritage of this great country. As we mark the 251st anniversary of this legendary speech, we honor the enduring patriotic spirit he set in motion, and as we begin the next two and a half centuries of our national story, we renew our devotion to advancing a brighter, more radiant, and more glorious American future.

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