Shepherdstown Friends Meeting
Minute on Harms Caused by the Actions of our Current Government

The term “Friends of the Truth” was the original name used by members of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Seeking and speaking truth motivates us to create the following statement of our deep concern with the current government’s stark disregard of Constitutional principles and laws, and the harm being done to the people of our country.

We Quakers believe in the inherent value of every person, in fostering peaceful and supportive community relationships, and in equal rights for all. We recognize that the principles and laws laid out in the Constitution of the United States align with many of our deeply held spiritual beliefs: those of liberty and justice for all, fundamental rights, human equality, and opportunity for everyone.

The Constitution states that the President shall take the following oath:

> "I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." (Article II, Section 1)

President Trump has actively failed to honor his oath of office and has thereby caused the following serious harms to the people of the United States:

Harms Caused by the Failure to Protect our First Amendment Rights:

Three of the fundamental freedoms granted by the First Amendment are the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the right of the people to peaceably assemble. Examples of violations of these rights include:

- In an unprecedented encroachment on the freedom of speech in places of learning, the executive branch directs universities on what can be said and taught.
- Language supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion is banned from use in government agencies and educational systems.
- Press with a potentially critical point of view are denied access to press conferences and other sources of information. Support for publicly funded media such as PBS and NPR is withdrawn.
- The freedom to gather for peaceful protests is suppressed by the presence of armed military forces.

Harms From the Failure to Provide Due Process of Law for All People:

The Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the US Constitution provide protections for *all people living in the United States.* Due process requires that before depriving an individual of "... of life, liberty, or property…" (Fifth Amendment), the government must provide notice of charges, an opportunity to be heard and present a defense, and a decision by an impartial tribunal or neutral decision maker.

Examples of harms caused by the government's failure to honor due process include:

- Persons targeted by federal agents because of their race or ethnicity are seized and detained without access to representation, resources, or communications with family members. Families are often permanently separated by this practice, and the safety of children is compromised.
- Immigrants and refugees are deported without access to due process of law. Detention centers serve as camps where people endure cruel and inhumane treatment, including physical and psychological deprivation.

Harms From the Failure to Support Equal Rights for All People:

Laws and regulations designed to protect oppressed communities are being dismantled or ignored.

- Organizations such as Planned Parenthood that support women's and LGBTQ health are defunded, making essential medical treatment harder to access and further increasing disparities in health care.
- The history of America is rewritten so that the complete history of oppressed communities is not told.
- Food (SNAP) and health care programs (Medicaid) are cut, thereby depriving children, the poor and the elderly of basic human services.

Harms Caused by the Failure to Preserve the Constitutional Limitation of Executive Powers through a System of Checks and Balances:

Our three branches of government- the executive, judicial, and legislative – are designed to protect our society from authoritarian rule and support a government "of the people, by the people, for the people". This constitutional system of checks and balances is being undermined by the abuse of executive power. Our democracy is harmed, when, for example:

- Judicial rulings directing the executive branch to cease certain deportations of immigrants are repeatedly disregarded.
- Federal employees are fired without regard to labor laws and union agreements.
- Executive orders abandon years of work promoting international peace, economic development, and humanitarian aid.
- Executive orders defund scientific and medical research approved by Congress, thereby robbing us of scientific knowledge and lifesaving medical advances.
- Cities are occupied by active military and National Guard troops despite laws that forbid military involvement in domestic law enforcement.

We, the members of the Shepherdstown Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, adopt this statement as our truth about the harm being done to the people of the United States in the name of a president who fails to uphold his oath of office. The United States was founded on the values stated in the *Preamble to the Declaration of Independence*:

> "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."

Without immediate action by the Congress and Judiciary to restore the checks on presidential power, the United States is at risk of losing the constitutional democracy created 250 years ago.

Adopted by *the Shepherdstown Friends Meeting, WV, Sept 14, 2025*

Endorsed By:

Hopewell Centre Monthly Meeting, Winchester, VA, on Dec 14, 2025

Annapolis Friends Meeting, Annapolis, MD, on Feb 1, 2026

Midcoast Friends Meeting, Damariscotta, ME, on Feb 15, 2026

Stony Run Meeting, Baltimore, MD, on Mar 1, 2026

Patapsco Friends Meeting, Ellicott City, MD, on Mar 29, 2026

Bethesda Friends Meeting, Bethesda, MD on Apr 12, 2026

Patuxent Friends Meeting, Lusby, MD, on Apr 12, 2026

Frederick Friends Meeting, Frederick, MD, on Apr 12, 2026

Gunpowder Friends Meeting, Sparks, MD, on May 10, 2026

Adelphi Friends Meeting, Adelphi, MD, on May 17, 2026