

While John Adams was in attendance at the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, his wife Abigail was at home in Braintree, Massachusetts, running the farm, raising four children, and maintaining a lively correspondence with her husband on a wide range of topics including news of family and friends, the activities of the British troops which had lately quitted Boston, and this advice on what to put into a proposed Constitution. The text is adapted from her letter dated 31 March 1776.

*I long to hear that you have declared an independency -- and by the way, in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies. Be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could; that your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute. Why then not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation. But such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend. Adieu. I need not say how much I am your ever faithful friend.*

duration: c. 3:20