

Extract: Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address, 4 March 1801

“During the contest of opinion through which we have past, the animation of discussions and of exertions has sometimes worn an aspect which might impose on strangers unused to think freely, and to speak and to write what they think; but this being now decided by the voice of the nation, announced according to the rules of the constitution all will of course arrange themselves under the will of the law, and unite in common efforts for the common good. All too will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression.”

Full transcript available at:

<http://founders.archives.gov/?q=%20Author%3A%22Jefferson%2C%20Thomas%22%20first%20inaugural%20address&s=1111311111&r=2>