

Conservatives Unveil Manifesto to Unite Movement

✖ More than 15,000 people have signed on to a new conservative manifesto aimed at limiting government and reaffirming “the ideas of the American Founding.”

The Mount Vernon Statement was unveiled Wednesday at George Washington’s Mount Vernon home in a signing ceremony attended by more than 80 conservative leaders.

The signers include Heritage Foundation President Edwin Feulner Jr., former Attorney General Ed Meese, Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, Americans for Tax Reform President Grover Norquist, Concerned Women for America President Wendy Wright, chairman Richard Viguerie, and David Keene, head of the American Conservative Union, which is sponsoring the Conservative Political Action Conference being held this week in Washington, D.C.

The document is based on the Sharon statement, which was signed in 1960 at the home of *National Review* editor William F. Buckley, Jr., in Sharon, Conn. Both documents seek to define the primary role of government and unite all major conservative elements—economic, social and national security—under a set of shared principles.

“The change we urgently need, a change consistent with the American ideal, is not movement away from but toward our founding principles,” the Mount Vernon document states. “At this important time, we need a restatement of Constitutional conservatism grounded in the priceless principle of ordered liberty articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.”

The statement was posted on a Web site Wednesday, where it has been signed by 15,500 individuals, according to CRC Public

Relations. The firm is monitoring the site to weed out pranksters who on Wednesday were signing the manifesto under names such as "Adolph Hitler" and "Joe Dufus."

"With this statement, and its many signatories, a new day dawns for the conservative movement," said Feulner, who helped draft the document. "It reasserts conservative principles, values and beliefs that are embraced by more people in this country than those of any political ideology."

In a statement Wednesday, Viguerie said the cause of limited government was hampered when conservatives became an appendage of the GOP. "For years, I've said the number one problem for the cause of limited government is that many conservatives became an appendage of the GOP. He blames "big government Republicans" such as George Bush, Karl Rove and Tom DeLay for Republican losses in 2006 and 2008.

"Hopefully, the Mount Vernon Statement will draw a line to clearly separate the principled conservatives from the majority of Washington politicians (Republican and Democratic) who want to continue to expand the reach, power, control, and influence of government at all levels," Viguerie said.

POLITICO noted that the Mount Vernon Statement is one of several similar documents attempting to define the modern conservative movement. Newt Gingrich has introduced a "new Contract With America" based on the original 1994 document he helped write; a group of Tea Party activists is seeking to gather support for its "Contract From America," while former House Speaker Newt Gingrich announced plans for a "new Contract With America." Meanwhile, House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) said he is drafting a Republican campaign platform that he believes will be compared with the 1994 document.