independent. So long as virtue is the prominent feature of
American jurisprudence, the Eagle of liberty will have full
scope for his wings. If our republic like unsuspecting
unarmed has opened the portals of humanity and rendered
itself vulnerable to the poison in daily of a vicious world, it
is a more lovely trait in its character than all the splendid
equipment of a tyrant's throne or the boasted energy of human
legislation. But the poison is not without an antidote. Let
the virtuous and patriotic people of this fair portion of the
free common, committing their sacred rights to loving,
disorganizing those would turn the current of defections
into the stream of self-interest, or to ambition, withering
these that would rise for itself a monument of foreign
structures upon the ruins of liberty.

James K. Polk
August 30th, 1817