SS.7.C.1.4 Benchmark Clarification 3: Students will analyze the relationship between natural rights and the role of government.

One of the basic functions of government is to protect the natural rights of individuals. Although, according to the Declaration of Independence, government does not give individuals these natural rights—individuals are born with these rights and government protects these rights through the consent of the governed. Government, then, receives its powers from the consent of the people who are being governed. When the government becomes oppressive or does not protect the rights of the people and becomes a tyranny, the people have the right to "alter or abolish" the government, by changing it or replacing it with another government. The Declaration of Independence does not create a government.

**consent of the governed** - an agreement made by the people to establish a government and abide by its laws

**Declaration of Independence** - a document written in 1776 that listed the basis for democratic government and the grievances of the colonists

**natural rights** - the belief that individuals are born with basic rights that cannot be taken away by governments

**oppression** - the use of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner

**tyranny** - a government in which a single ruler possesses and abuses absolute power