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WORKING TOWARD A MORE PERFECT UNION

This Independence Day we must remind ourselves, as Ronald Reagan did: “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.” The great orator and patriot Patrick Henry asked his contemporaries: “I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!” James Madison wisely pointed out, “If men were angels there would be no need for government.”

People have seemingly lost faith in our institutions to help meet our societal challenges. Socialism is openly embraced by many millennials. While they have seen the flaws of capitalism, most millennials have not seen the failures of socialism firsthand. The media rarely reports on the dark side of socialism or the benefits of capitalism.

Herbert Hoover, said: “Communism is an evil thing. It is contrary to the spiritual, moral, and material aspirations of man. These very reasons give rise to my conviction that it will decay and die of its own poisons. But that may be many years away and, in the meantime, we must be prepared for a long journey.” Unfortunately, there are more than 1 billion people still living today under the Marxist socialist regimes of China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, and Laos.

Freedom around the globe was strengthened and resistance to Marxism grew in the 1980s. In June 1989, we witnessed brave students protesting in Beijing, China. The Communist government killed students and other protestors using tanks and assault rifles in Tiananmen Square. Then we watched the Berlin Wall torn down in November 1989. However, Herbert Hoover could not have predicted the future of our own country.

Despite that, on June 25, 2021, [Axios poll](#) revealed that in the capitalist US, just 49% of Americans aged 18-to-34 support capitalism. And 51% say they have a positive view of socialism. Venezuelan Maria Fernanda Bello, who has seen socialism first hand in her native country as a cautionary tale: "Socialists are always going to promise you free tuition, free health care, free everything, but they will never promise you freedom."

We should be grateful we live in a country where we still have our freedom. However, we cannot be sure future generations will have the same freedoms moving forward. Limited government, individual freedom, and traditional values are likely to remain priorities in our state for the immediate future, as long as we are vigilant. Nationally, we see disturbing trends away from liberty. Partisanship has become an extreme contact sport in our nation’s capital. That is why states best serve as the laboratories of democracy for our nation.

SUMMARY

In order for future generations to experience the same freedom we have now, we must understand our rights and responsibilities, in order to reclaim our identity as a nation.

What sacrifice would we be willing to make today for freedom? That is a question we should ask ourselves frequently. We must make the world better than the one we inherited. Today's children are tomorrow's future, and education is a proven path to upward mobility for all students. Education is even more critical when you consider our success or failure could determine the survival of the nation. It is why civics education is critical, and why students must understand the processes of government, their constitutional rights, and the history of our state and nation.

Our founders believed that man was born in the image of God, and as the Declaration of Independence states, all men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." George Washington expressed the founders' realism that humans are imperfect and flawed: "perfection falls not to the share of mortals." Benjamin Franklin knew that the United States Constitution "with all its faults" was better than anything else we could put together to govern our country. However, in the United States "We the People" still get to tell the government what to do, the government does not tell the people what to do.

We are an imperfect state and nation governed by imperfect people working toward a more perfect union. Acknowledging the faults of those assembled Franklin said: "when you assemble a number of men to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men, all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views."

Franklin also reminded us "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Abraham Lincoln added, "Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves." If we want the freedom to endure and not become extinct, we are going to have to remain guarded and informed not just on Independence Day, but every day.

When we understand our rights and responsibilities, we can reclaim our identity as a nation, and perhaps be more united as citizens. We must have an unwavering belief in our ability to unite around a common purpose that freedom is still preferred in our state and nation. Franklin also wisely stated: "The US Constitution only guarantees your rights as a citizen, it doesn't guarantee happiness. It may take work, but if you have your rights, happiness is very possible."

The preservation of our liberty will be an ongoing battle, something else our Founders plainly understood. Only educated citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities can compel our government officials to obey their oaths to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution. Let freedom continue to ring across our nation, as we work toward perfection as a people and a nation.

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