



## Celebrating Independence Day

The Fourth of July is a day when we can stop and reflect on the free and independent life we all have. On July 4, 1776, the United States of America was founded with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, an event cementing the American Revolution. In signing their names to the Declaration, fifty-six men of simple means and education put their lives, happiness, and worldly possessions on the line to give future generations freedom. These men, above all else, wanted freedom and liberty. Many faced British charges of treason, some would witness their homes and livelihood taken from them and destroyed. Yet all stood proud and with determination pledged their devotion: "*For the support of this Declaration, with the firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor,*" and with the stroke of a pen, 56 men created the United States of America.

The Founding Fathers gave us a nation that believes in its people, a government of the people and by the people, and a people whose freedom will be defended against all enemies. Thanks to their selflessness and bravery, the United States of America this July 4th celebrates its 229th birthday – 229 years of independence, liberty, freedom and the uninterrupted pursuit of happiness. Today, some take freedom and liberty for granted. Many Americans have been to war to win the freedom of others but few have had to fight for personal freedom. Everyone's heard the line "*four score and seven years ago.*" But the reasons that line exists are more important than the six words themselves. The phrase comes from Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Gettysburg Address in which the 16th president reflects on how our country was founded. On the November morning of Lincoln's address, many surely wondered if the country would continue its economic ascent, or if the Civil War would destroy what the Founding Fathers had created.

Our freedom is at the forefront of the War on Terror, and Americans are once again faced with the trial of defending our God given birthright of freedom. Amid the violent images we see from the Middle East, it is perhaps natural to ask whether the sacrifice is worth it. Many question whether winning the war in Iraq is essential to winning the War on Terror. As President Bush explained recently, among the terrorists, there is no debate that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror. Osama bin Laden chose to make his stand in Iraq, calling it the "third world war – a war that will end in victory and glory, or misery

and humiliation." The terrorists know that their survival is at stake and Americans must not underestimate how crucial this time is to our vitality. We must complete this mission; we must prevent the terrorists from turning Iraq into a launching pad for attacks on the rest of the world.

We must continue to help the Iraqi people build a free nation that can govern and protect itself. As President Bush notes, "Iraq now carries that hope of freedom in a vital region of the world, and the rise of democracy will be the ultimate triumph over radicalism and terror. And we know that this great ideal of human freedom was entrusted to us in a special way and the ideal of liberty is worth defending."

We will always have to fight for our freedom whether the enemy is foreign or domestic. We are not a perfect nation, but we enjoy more freedoms than any other nation and our promise of freedom is perfect. As Americans we know that we owe our freedoms and liberties to our forefathers and the democracy they established. With privilege comes responsibility, and as a nation, must not hide from this responsibility. We must face it with great resolve and courage because we know what is at stake.

May we all celebrate this 4<sup>th</sup> of July safely and honor one another together. Happy 4th of July to you and yours.

## **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com>.

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