



# THE STOUFFER REPORT

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**Capitol Building, Room 332**  
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**For the Week of:**  
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## **Celebrating Our Independence by Remembering Our Past**

The American Dream, the melting pot, and the right to speak for or against government will all be celebrated this 4<sup>th</sup> day in July as the United States marks its 230<sup>th</sup> birthday. As we fire up the barbeque grill and shoot off fireworks this Independence Day, we need to remember our freedoms, the struggles people made to come to what is America, and those who died fighting for our liberties.

Our founding fathers believed “all Men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” We have a nation worth coming to—last year alone over 600,000 immigrants became legal American citizens in search of these dreams. Since the beginning of the United States many have lost their lives on the path to the promise land, through tough weather and living conditions.

The founders went on to navigate their young nation through a bloody conflict with the world’s strongest empire. Meanwhile, they were struggling to unite a republic when the colonies seemed ready to turn their backs on one another. These revolutionaries went on to implement a new Constitution, which has lasted 217 years. Over the course of those years, our nation has strengthened its commitment to freedom by expanding civil rights to all citizens.

In the past few months I have attended two soldiers' funerals that were killed in Iraq. These events reminded me that the opportunities and freedoms we experience everyday are not a right but a privilege. We can not forget there are other soldiers around the world and stateside, serving day in and day out to protect our great nation.

We also need to celebrate the everyday heroes who make America possible—volunteer fire fighters running into buildings when everyone else is running out, our teachers educating our children, our ministers changing lives, and our grandparents volunteering their time for our community.

This includes the father serving as an undercover cop keeping our children safe from drugs and sexual predators. Even closer to home, it includes the firefighters, EMTs, health-care professionals, and friends who helped when the Elks Lodge in Clinton collapsed this week.

On this Independence Day, I encourage everyone to reflect on the freedoms you have that other people in nations around the world may not and the sacrifices people made throughout the 230 years to bring you these freedoms. Let's be thankful we have a lawn to mow, a bed to make, and a house to paint. Let us also give thanks to those who have and continue to make this great nation possible.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by email at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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