

# A Guide for Departing High School Seniors

- Adapted from The 1776 Report

“The facts of our founding are not partisan.  
They are a matter of history.”

## INTRODUCTION

The 1776 Report requires a restoration of American education, which can only be grounded on a history of those principles that is “accurate, honest, unifying, inspiring, and ennobling.” Which also includes a rediscovery of our shared identity rooted in our founding principles is the path to a renewed American unity and a confident American future. Today, however, Americans are deeply divided about the meaning of their country, its history, and how it should be governed. The Commission’s first responsibility is to produce a report summarizing the principles of the American founding and how those principles have shaped our country. That can only be done by truthfully recounting the aspirations and actions of the men and women who sought to build America as a shining “city on a hill”—an exemplary nation, one that protects the safety and seeks to promote the happiness of its people, as an example to be admired and emulated by nations of the world that wish to steer their government toward greater liberty and justice. **We will-we must-always hold these truths.**

## THE MEANING OF THE DECLARATION

The United States of America is a diverse and vibrant country like no other. We are a young country that stands true to what the Founding Fathers have created. The United States “is a republic; that is to say its government was designed to be directed by the will of the people rather than the wishes of a single individual or a narrow class of elites.”

But there was no United States of America before signing The Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. As history teaches, the thirteen colonies did not like that a distant king was calling the shots. By signing the Declaration of Independence, the colonists asserted their God-given right to freedom and stood up to their King to win their independence.

The beauty of this new independence was that the newly freed colonists were recognized as distinct individuals of differing identities; people from different colonies referred to themselves as New Yorkers, and Pennsylvanians worshiped differently and had differing political opinions. It also granted “inalienable rights” to be defended, protected, and not taken away from anyone. The Founding Fathers were clear on this when crafting the Declaration of Independence, and it formed the foundation of this new America.

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## THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The \_\_\_\_\_ contains the guidelines on which our country was formed. It is designed to keep the government in check, prevent one person from becoming more powerful than another, and distinguish human rights from the guarantee of self-government. The Declaration of Independence states, “that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, - That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.”

It is our job to uphold the truths and values spoken in this document and protect them. We must never forget all that was sacrificed for the great freedoms our country affords us and to cherish and defend the rights we continue to enjoy more than 200 years after the Declaration was written.

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**“They wished to state a justification for their actions, and for the government to which it would give birth, that is both true and moral because it is faithful to the truth about things.”**

*– The 1776 Report*

## A CONSTITUTION OF PRINCIPLES

The founders of the United States had accomplished what they wanted; they defeated the world’s strongest military and financial power through years of struggle and had won. Now, principles needed to be implemented to establish and build the rule of law. The first attempt at a form of government was the Articles of Confederation; however, this attempt to develop a new government failed because it was a weak form of a national government. Ultimately, this led to the creation of the \_\_\_\_\_.

The meaning and purpose of the Constitution of 1787 cannot be understood without recourse to the principles of the Declaration of Independence- human equality, the requirement for the consent of the governed, and the securing of natural rights- which the Constitution is intended to embody, protect, and nurture. The goal of the Constitution was to construct a government that would be sufficiently strong at establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility, providing for the common defense, and promoting the general welfare— (the main tasks named in the document’s preamble), but not so vital as to jeopardize the people’s liberties. It needed to be stable enough to prevent the Union’s breakup, keep the thirteen states united, and prevent the reemergence of tyranny.

While the Constitution has encompassed these necessary tasks, another critical feature is the careful way that it limits the powers of each branch of government. The founders knew that no document written by humans could ever be perfect or anticipate every future contingent. They provided a process to amend the record- but only by popular decision-making and not by ordinary legislation or judicial decree. This gave way to the first ten amendments, which came to be known as the Bill of Rights. These were included at the demand of those primarily concerned about vesting the federal government with too much power and who wanted to enumerate specific rights that the new government lawfully could not withhold.

**“In other words, the new government needed to be strong enough to have the power to secure rights without having so much power as to enable or encourage it to infringe rights.”**

*– The 1776 Report*

## **CHALLENGES TO AMERICA’S PRINCIPLES**

The following movements “are all united by adherence to the same falsehood- that people do not have equal worth and equal rights.”

### **SLAVERY**

First, “it is essential to insist at the outset that the institution be seen in a much broader perspective- Slavery is not a uniquely American evil.” “The primary reason why the founders did not immediately abolish slavery was to establish the principle of consent as the ground of all political legitimacy and to check against any possible future drift toward or return to despotism.” All in all, “the Declaration’s unqualified proclamation of human equality flatly contradicted the existence of human bondage and, along with the Constitution’s compromises understood in light of that proposition, set the stage for abolition.” Further, “the First Continental Congress agreed to discontinue the slave trade and boycott other nations that engaged in it, and the Second Continental Congress reaffirmed this policy.”

### **PROGRESSIVISM**

In response to the Industrial Revolution, following the Civil War, a series of ideas emerged known as Progressivism. According to the political thought of Progressivism, the so-called archaic founding principles of the U.S. could not adequately govern the changing times. Further, progressives held that creating an omniscient body of civil servants, led only by “pragmatism” or “science,” was necessary to direct society through the currents of the time effectively. Consequently, a shadow government emerged, known as the bureaucracy, which never faces elections and today operates primarily without checks and balances. Moreover, individuals who serve in the bureaucracy are not held accountable to the people, which opposes the intentions of the U.S. Constitution.

### **FASCISM**

“Fascism first arose in Italy under the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini, largely in response to Bolshevism in Russia. According to fascist belief, “all power- corporate and political- would be exercised by the state and directed toward the same goal.” Moreover, “individual rights and freedoms hold no purchase under Fascism. Its principle instead, in Mussolini’s words, ‘everything in the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state.’”

### **COMMUNISM**

“Communism seems to preach a radical or extreme form of human equality. But at its core, wrote Karl Marx, is ‘the idea of the class struggle as the immediate driving force of history, and particularly the class struggle between the bourgeois and the proletariat.’ In the communist mind, people are not born equal and free; they

are defined entirely by their class.”

## **RACISM AND IDENTITY POLITICS**

Despite the abolition of legal slavery with the 13th amendment, racism in the U.S. persisted. In the postbellum south, Jim Crow laws “enforced the strict segregation of the races, and gave legal standing in some states to a pervasive subordination of black individuals.” Although the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s aimed to address these lasting inequalities, the effort was almost immediately turned to programs that ran counter to the lofty ideals of the founders. “Today, far from a regime of equal natural rights for equal citizens, enforced by the equal application of law, we have moved toward a system of explicit group privilege that, in the name of ‘social justice,’ demands equal results and explicitly sorts citizens into ‘protected classes’ based on race and other demographic categories.” “Eventually this regime of formal inequality would come to be known as ‘identity politics.’ The stepchild of earlier rejections of the founding, identity politics values people by characteristics like race, sex, and sexual orientation. New times demand new rights to replace the old. This is the opposite of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s hope that African Americans would ‘live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,’ and denies that all are endowed with the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

## **CREATED EQUAL OR IDENTITY POLITICS?**

Identity politics has three key features. “First, the creed of identity politics defines and divides Americans in terms of collective and social identities. According to this new creed, our racial and sexual identities are more important than our common status as individual people.” “Second, identity politics rank these different racial and social groups in terms of privilege and power, with disproportionate moral worth allotted to each. Further, it divides Americans into two groups: oppressors and victims.” “Third, the creed of identity politics teaches that America and its values are to blame for oppression. According to this new creed, Americans are not a people defined by their dedication to human equality, but a people defined by their perpetuation of racial and sexual oppression.” “Whereas the Declaration of Independence founded a nation grounded on human equality and equal rights, identity politics sees a nation defined by oppressive hierarchies.”

## **INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF IDENTITY POLITICS**

“The modern revival of identity politics stems from mid-20th century European thinkers who sought the revolutionary overthrow of their political and social systems but were disillusioned by the working class’s lack of interest in inciting revolution.” “One of the most prominent of these individuals, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, argued that the focus should not be on economic revolution as much as taking control of the institutions that shape culture.” “Gramsci was an important influence on the thinkers of the ‘Frankfurt School’ in Germany, who developed a set of revolutionary ideas called Critical Theory.” “These are the ideas that led to the development of Critical Race Theory, a variation of critical theory applied to the American context that stresses racial divisions and sees society in terms of minority racial groups oppressed by the white majority.”

## THE RADICALIZATION OF AMERICAN POLITICS IN THE 1960S

“In leading the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr. was aware that other, more revolutionary groups wanted to fight in terms of group identities. In his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech, King rejected hateful stereotyping based on a racialized group identity. The ‘marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust all white people,’ he warned. King refused to define Americans in terms of permanent racialized identities and called on Americans ‘to lift our nation from the quicksand’s of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood’ and see ourselves as one nation united by a common political creed and commitment to Christian love.” “As the 1960s advanced, however, many rejected King’s formulation of civil rights and reframed debates about equality in terms of racial and sexual identities.”

## THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF IDENTITY POLITICS WITH AMERICAN PRINCIPLES

“Identity politics divide Americans by placing them perpetually in conflict with each other.” “First, identity politics attacks American self-government. Through the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances, American constitutionalism prevents any one group from having complete control of the government. To form a majority, the various groups that comprise the nation must resolve their disagreements in light of shared principles and come to a deliberative consensus over how best to govern.” “Identity politics, on the other hand, sees politics as the realm of permanent conflict and struggle among racial, gender, and other groups and no compromise between different groups is possible.” “Second, by dividing Americans into oppressed and oppressor groups, activists of identity politics propose to punish some citizens- many times for wrongs their ancestors allegedly committed- while rewarding others.” “Third, identity politics denies the fundamental moral tenet of the Declaration, that human beings are equal by nature.” “Repudiating this universal tenet, activists pushing identity politics rely instead on cultural and historical generalizations about which groups have stronger moral claims than others.” And finally, “identity-politics activists often are radicals whose political program is fundamentally incompatible not only with the principles of Declaration of Independence but also the rule of law embodied by the United States Constitution.”

## THE TASK OF NATIONAL RENEWAL - THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

A child’s family is largely responsible for the proper education of their child, to educate them first and foremost on how to interact with others respectfully, make rational decisions, and behave maturely. A good parent contributes to forming a good person and a good citizen through the lessons they teach their child.

The Founding Fathers of America understood the importance of the family model to the development of a child, as they referred to the family as the “Seminary of the Republic,” a term derived from early roman statesmanship that defined a family as a means for a child to certain inherent habits, morals and character traits that would eventually define them as a citizen.

When a child sees their parents working hard on a specific task, they learn the dignity of labor and the reward of self-discipline. When a child sees their parents dispute a political doctrine or idea that may challenge their beliefs or go against their rights as citizens, they will firsthand see and learn the importance of self-expression and the critical ability to develop their own, meaningful opinion.

For the American Republic to continue, the role of a family must continue to be the basis for their child's education, teaching their children the essential values that pertain to the American identity that help safeguard the rights of both our freedom and self-government.

## **FAITH AND AMERICA'S PRINCIPLES**

A critical, underlying tone in the teaching of American history is the importance that religious faith has had in both the founding and our past in general. However, many Americans today believe that spiritual practice and political life conflict, considering that religion should remain aloof from the political mainstream. As many of the founders held the general opinion that all people have the right to practice their religion, they also believed the right to religion is crucial to the prolonged success of a republican form of government.

A profoundly rooted sentiment of the American identity is the existence of faith. The implications that a person practicing their dignified faith within America's public space have been honored since our nation's very inception.

## **CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

America's founding came when political life, interconnected with religious life, had seen two massive changes to their respective institutions. The first of these changes was the notable separation of civil and religious law. In the era predating the widespread adoption of Christianity in Western societies, very little distinction was observed between the demand of a specific state or the order of a particular religious figure. There were multiple commonalities between civil and religious cases of breaking laws; political institutions regarded the violation of religious and civil laws as the same, which solidified that violating these laws was intrinsically compatible.

The ultimate turning point was the widespread adoption of Christianity; the religion inherently undid the unified nature of political and religious obligation by fomenting a church whose authority was exterior to that of civil law.

The second inherent change was Christianity's subdivisions that would develop over the years through the varying interpretations of the basis of Christianity. Events such as the Great Schism and the Protestant Reformation would lead to multiple denominations of Christianity arising and went against the traditional that communities were members of the same religious sect. This event would fallout among different subsets of the once unified Christian denomination, seeing a rise in religious-political conflict.

## **THE FOUNDERS' SOLUTION**

America's founding fathers were not strangers to religious oppression that was integral to the history of humanity. Additionally, they understood the desire of man to pursue the meaningful truths of the universe, to seek out the truth about religion and the values that reside within the existence of religious beliefs that live in politics and aspects of our daily lives. At the same time, they were aware of discrimination held by certain people against dissenters, or nonbelievers, of a widely accepted and worshipped religion, something the founders sought to change in a new means for political and religious freedom.

Moreover, the Founding Fathers had no claim to have solved the questions of our existence, which revolved around religious revelation and questioning the reasoning of things. The Constitution, and its framing, was an outlier in terms of how it treated the role of religion in both its political and civil discourse, as the document did not give the National Government the power to establish a national religion. The Constitution additionally barred anyone from being deterred a particular political office based on their chosen faith. In doing so, the Constitution broadly outlined the ability of citizens to freely exercise a religion of their choice, residing outside the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

The commonly associated phrasing with this aspect of the Constitution is “separation of church and state,” which primarily reflects the attitudes of the Founding Fathers when attempting to cement the role of religion in the grand scheme of the Republic- however, this phrase is commonly misinterpreted. The word itself does not mean to reflect intentions to remove religious faith from every aspect of political life in a Republic; far from it: The founders did deny the government the power to establish a base religion for its citizens to follow as a mandate. However, they did not do this to totally separate religious and civil liberties, instead to give its citizens freer reign over which faith they choose to worship, aloof from government suggestion or directive.

One commonality held amongst many of America’s founding fathers was their emphasis on the distinction held between civil and religious liberties. In their eyes, a dedicated government would have no power to legitimize one religion as the definitive; in other words, they felt a constitution that established a republic of citizens of different faiths would have the ability to allow freedom of religion to exist.

The United States has survived for two centuries based on the values that were inherently bestowed on our nation by our founders and the documents that help govern it. Despite some founders’ disagreeing about the role of religion vs. political liberties, there was little doubt that religious faith was essential to the republic they had created. They realized that citizens who could freely practice the religion of their choice under this newfound Constitution would support a document that fomented religious freedom.

The United States has arrived at a unique point in our history that sees the overlooking, or even sometimes straight forward rejection of the original values that are inherent to our country’s founding documents and the identity of the citizen it portrays. A commonality amongst many American citizens in the current political landscape is that the patriotic feeling of love for their country and the admiring and embracing of the American identity has now vanished through and through.

To prevent this from becoming a selected narrative of the current landscape, we must admit that the common ground of equal natural rights, which are common morality is based on as citizens, has either faded or is no longer present within many Americans. As citizens of the same republic, we must emphasize the values that made our country great from our inception, the realization that the truths solidified in the Declaration of Independence are “self-evident truths” that should unite American citizens under their unique yet common creed. The Founding Fathers have asserted that faith was “the key to good character as well as good citizenship,” with this emphasis serving as a narrative that should be maintained and remain integral to the American identity- “one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

## TEACHING AMERICA

In an educative sense, the purpose of a school is to teach their students the essential skills that will eventually allow them to become contributing members to society, with some of these basic skills entailing mathematics,

reading, writing, etc. America's founding fathers believed that educators should, ideally, convey a sense of enlightened patriotism to their students that will adequately equip each consecutive generation with the knowledge about America's founding and the principles associated with the American identity; to have students hold, in their reserve, a deep reverence for their liberties, and a profound love of who they are as an American. A wholesome education also passes on the stories of great Americans from the past who have contributed to the preservation of this nation.

To clarify, the love for one's country mentioned here is vastly different from a love for one's family or romantic partner. This cannot be imposed on anyone by any educator. However, this sort of love for one's country and identity as a citizen must be freely embraced and coexist with the elements of criticism, dissent, disappointment, and even aspects of shame that can come along with the moral maturity of one person.

Governments at the state and local levels are responsible for adopting lesson plans and curriculum that will teach children the inherent values of what it means to be an American- the principles that will help inspire and dignify all American citizens. This would include important events throughout our history that are integral to the story of the American Republic. Just as many Americans do today, the Founding Fathers understood the importance of education to the long-term success or failure of the American experiment in self-government. As for a republican form of government, citizens with the teaching in these historical happenings ARE essential to the republic's success. Educators should portray to their students an accurate history of our country and how the principles of the American identity have faced deterrence; however, they have ultimately overcome challenges to them since 1776.

A truthful and nonwavering study of our accurate history will help to teach coming generations of students to both embrace and maintain the courageous nature of the Americans that have come in ages before us while at the same time attempting to learn from their mistakes.

In doing what is mentioned prior, school districts should actively prevent a curriculum that promotes a one-sided idealism or partisan propaganda that could deter students to the true values of an American citizen; while also attempting to prevent students from being lured into a bias political agenda. Educators, who solely intend to promote a political agenda, actively abuse their platform and endangers a student's moral development through their own bias.

## **TEACHING AMERICANS ABOUT THEIR COUNTRY**

The Founding Fathers of America had an inherent realization and emphasis on the importance of education and the effects of instilling lessons of both histories and common skills that would contribute to the success of an eventual citizen in society. The idea of liberty and learning are deeply intertwined, as one essentially cannot exist without the other, as both ideals rely on the other for protection and nurturing. James Madison famously once said, "What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable than that of Liberty and Learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual and surest support?"

Lessons in crucial subject areas like civics, historical teachings, literature, and mathematics are integral to the proper development of students into full-fledged citizens. The basis of a strong republican government does not only stem from the documents that are certified to govern but from citizens who are educated in the necessary skills and subject matter to understand their government and the world around them. A citizen's knowledge of their unalienable rights and human nature, in general, will allow for them to have a greater perspective into the field of public affairs and will also contribute to them recognizing the issues of the past

in our republic and how to prevent them from occurring again in the present. An education in civics proves essential to contributing to society and promotes the American identity within a person.

## THE MISUSE OF HISTORY

To adopt this type of education, we must avoid a substantial mistake in the recollections of historical teachings: by identifying that it is wrong to think of history as a “standard of judgment.” The “standard” mentioned is based on the principles and values that have been integral to the story of American history since the inception of the republic, as they are timeless truths that transcend history and give light to our identity as citizens. The self-evident truths our founders identified and guaranteed for all people within the republic serve as a basis of human interactions and standards: identifying that all people are created equal and have the same standard of unalienable rights that the government, or any government, cannot deny or take away.

Slavery, and its widespread use before the end of the Civil War, is a subject of American history that sparks debate until this day. At the time of the writing and signing of the Declaration of Independence, an estimated 20% of the American people were enslaved. Nonetheless, an embarrassing statistic, this fact solely contradicted many of the embraced values so highly discussed and emphasized in the Declaration, with the focus points of liberty and equality seeming somewhat hypocritical to a population who could enslave others. As slavery is condemned in the present, closer examination at the practice about many of the Founding Fathers sees many of the founders actively denounce the practice and plain out believed the approach to be morally wrong. The founders would set America on track to eventually remove and ban the course by signing the Declaration of Independence.

To receive a genuine, liberal education, a student must identify the true definition of what it means to be free, both in practice and about their government. The purpose of education is to help students identify the true nature and workings of the world around them while also seeking to understand humanity and its role in the universe and a person’s role within that universe.

However, classrooms and curriculum of today tend to overlook the wisdom bestowed to a reader in these outstanding works of art. Many classrooms of today tend to lack close examination at the political and philosophical importance of many notable works of history and their repercussions on society, whether good or bad (the works of Homer and Plato, Dante and Shakespeare, Washington, and Lincoln, etc.). In turn, coming generations fail to recognize the importance of notable pieces of American history, seriously lacking in the knowledge of young students, and have little to no reverence for the standards of American citizenship.

## THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION

The decline in the quality of American education is a result of progressive reform stemming from the late nineteenth century, which saw educative reform attempt to “look over” how to go about traditional education methods. Instead of sticking with the educational narrative of passing down knowledge and wisdom aimed at making a student an eventual contributing member of society, students today now jump to conclusions and will make assumptions that the views of the Founding Fathers were particularly narrow are no longer legitimate. In other words, “that’s just how people used to think, but we know better now.”

This new approach to education brought about differing reasons to study notable works of historical figures (such as Aristotle, Shakespeare, or that of America’s Founders) which is not learning how to be virtuous, self-

governing citizens, or to learning anything true, good, or beautiful; rather, to teach students how such political figures of yesteryear are inanimately unfit for the teachings of the present day.

This progressive take on a new form of education would reach its logical apex throughout the progression of the twentieth century, as the formative goal for this educational objective sought to focus on only certain expressions of culture and beliefs of different cultures, avoiding fact-based truths with real learning objectives to relay to students.

One notable example of this is the distorted and fabricated histories of the United States and its relationship to slavery as notated by Howard Zinn and other contributors to the notorious “1619 Project”, which have inherently prevented students from being able to freely form opinions and certify erroneous truths regarding the founding of our republic. A critical component that is heavily seen in many education plans and curriculums regarding American history today tend to only focus on the negative aspects and failures of the American republic and its people in the past, portraying an illegitimate image of our nation and steering young minds away from forming free and independent opinions about America’s mistakes of the past ultimately not allowing them to recognize the characteristics that make America great.

## WHAT IS AUTHENTIC EDUCATION?

Formal education is of multi-aspect importance to the proper development of a student’s mind and, in turn, the development of a contributing member of a society whose knowledge is ripe with that of their own moral and civic guarantees. This has served as an eternal and crucial purpose for education, which has resonated in generations past. On top of identifying their civic responsibilities and inherent capabilities, formal education’s added goal is to equip a person with knowledge and skills to provide for themselves and their subsequential families.

Education serves the purpose of liberating oneself from confusion, ignorance, delusion, or prejudice. It seeks to teach a person facts and logistics for a person to use as a civilized adult. Formal education aims at helping a person see the world more clearly and opens the world up to rational questioning and forming one’s opinion.

Instead of educating a person about the inherent negatives and mishappenings that have gone on in the history of our country, an educated student’s basis of knowledge should resonate in their appreciation for the values that make up their identity as a citizen and as an independent-thought forming individual; learning to value rules of civic law, civil rights and that of respecting a person’s property; a love of the natural world, and the character traits that make up a good, positive person. A thoughtful-minded citizen will choose to embrace the national community that they are a member of and do their best to improve it in their manner.

## GENUINE CIVICS EDUCATION

Civics and Government classes should be based on the primary sources of our history that have contributed to the prolonged success of the American republic, and not in a faith-based ideological initiative. Primary sources allow students to examine the actual events and words from notable historical figures interactively and straightforwardly. Speeches, famous documents, letters, and firsthand accounts of significant historical events offer the unique ability to open communication between historical figures and the students who learn of them and receive a more accurate, fact-based education by utilizing such resources. They additionally allow students to peer into the mindset and the arguments made by historical figures with little to no outside bias from an

educator or another person.

Classes about this subject material should focus on conveying lessons about certain principles and foundations about the American identity and republic, including natural rights and laws, self-government, and human equality. As students and eventual citizens, one [student] should recognize the factors and reasons that contributed to the American republic becoming a representative democratic body with different branches of government, including the indoctrinated separation of powers between the three branches of government and the system of checks and balances that reinforces this functionality. The lessons about these essential aspects of our government should eventually culminate in a student's understanding and embracing of their liberties as a citizen of the American republic.

The founding fathers of the American republic recognized that a free people who are active citizens should have full, comprehensible knowledge of their liberties, a reverence for their identity as a free person, and an appreciation for the values that make them fundamentally American, who recognize the challenge and the ability to move forward with a full-ranged understanding of their values.

Since the republic's inception, our nation has had multiple missteps throughout our history that cannot and should not be ignored. Attempts to downplay the significance of these events should not be passed over; instead, they should serve as a fundamental basis for students to recognize how these events took place based on the historical figures and circumstances surrounding them. Despite this, the United States, as a republic, has achieved a heightened sense of personal freedom and prosperity among its people and the rest of the world community.

As portrayed in this guide, the authentic Civics education will allow us to rebuild our deeply rooted identity in history and help us increase our common bonds amongst our communities, and help to increase our civic devotion to our republic. But we cannot love what we do not know.

Therefore, civics education, education relating to the citizen, must begin with knowledge, which is "the surest basis of public happiness" as George Washington reminds us.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout our history, our heroes—men and women, young and old, black and white, of many faiths and from all parts of the world—have changed America for the better, not by abandoning these truths but by appealing to them. Upon these universal ideals, they built a great nation, unified a strong people, and formed a beautiful way of life worth defending. To be an American means something noble and good. It means treasuring freedom and embracing the vitality of self-government. We are shaped by the beauty, bounty, and wildness of our continent. We are united by the glory of our history. And we are distinguished by the American virtues of openness, honesty, optimism, determination, generosity, confidence, kindness, hard work, courage, and hope. Our principles did not create these virtues, but they laid the groundwork for them to grow and spread and forge America into the justest and glorious country in all of human history. As we approach the 250th anniversary of our independence, we must resolve to teach future generations of Americans an accurate record of our country so that we all learn and cherish our founding principles once again. We must renew the pride and gratitude for this great nation that we are blessed to call home. When we appreciate America for what she truly is, we know that our Declaration is worth preserving, our Constitution worth defending, our fellow citizens worth loving, and our country worth fighting for. **It is our task now to renew this commitment.**