

A Message of Thanksgiving

Washington D.C. and the U.S. Capitol more specifically, is more than just where a bill becomes a law. It is a past that we connect to through stories of hope and vision, wrought with conflict and built upon compromise. It is an idea that is housed within the many famous structures up and down the Mall from Capitol Hill. Living and breathing freedom flows through the streets that encompass the seats of power. I was reflecting on my last visit to Washington D.C., and I cannot help but feel the energy and potential for working to make things better for the American people. Whether you are a Republican or Democrat, young or old, man or woman, the freedoms we enjoy aren't this way in certain places half a globe away.

I read an article about the struggle for freedom in Iran in 2022, largely centered around a tragedy all too real. The article focused primarily on a young woman named Mahsa Amini, a twenty-two-year-old Iranian woman who was beaten by the "Morality Police" of Iran. Days later, she succumbed to her injuries for simply wearing her hijab "improperly". The oppressive nature of this theocratic regime in Iran gives me pause and I wonder what could have been. This oppression began there in 1979, a couple of years before I was born, and I count with sadness in my heart the millions of women who, over several generations, haven't been allowed to reach all the way up, to find their passion and chase their potential. Mahsa's life was cut short by a violent and oppressive regime that simply hates women.

I think of my ten-year-old and the opportunities that she has here in the United States, and it is with much gratitude for the many protections from government tyranny that are embedded within our Founding documents that I find comfort. I think we can all agree that things aren't perfect anywhere in the world, but Mahsa's story of human suffering, and the rallying protests that followed her murder, the human spirit simply yearns to be free, and I thank God every day that we are free. This is my Thanksgiving message to my family, to you, and it is followed by my wish for my daughter.

We live in the greatest nation in the history of the world, a nation where we have every advantage and opportunity, the chance to leave whatever humble beginnings, to shake off every setback, and begin anew. We can chart our own path, choose our own American Dream, and work to fulfill that. Our shared history demands that we carry on this proud tradition of self-determination, that we protect this sacred republic, and that we improve it for the next generation, leaving it better than we found it.

But it is not being left better than we found it. I see people who protest against slight inconveniences, claiming that our society is stacked against them. Discrimination some say. Misogyny I hear. Racism is screamed from the street corner. Yet bad behavior is rewarded with the title of victim, and if society is guilty, then how can any individual be held accountable for that? We must do better. I have taught my daughter to do better, to reach higher. We are not victims, but the beneficiary of a freedom bought by blood and sacrifice, and it is our duty to stand and protect that which we have been given, to honor that trust that has been placed in each of us. The people that we elect and send to represent us need to be worthy of that trust. Sadly, this duty is not being honored by far too many that complain about America, ironically, under the very protection they have in America.

STACEY for WISCONSIN

Paid for by Stacey for Wisconsin

The great news is that you don't need to go to Washington D.C. to see and feel liberty. All you have to do is wake up each day and remember that though freedom was not free, it continues to flow and breathe in every community across America. Wear whatever outfit you choose to, read any book or magazine that you like, go to the store and make your favorite meal for your family. Watch a movie or listen to your favorite song. Choose your career. Worship how you wish. We are blessed with so much, yet we forget how far too many others, like Mahsa, have too little or no freedom. Earlier, I mentioned my wish for my daughter, and it is a simple wish. That America that was born from revolution, matured in violent Civil War, that refused to yield to the fascism of the National Socialist German Workers' Party during WWII, that stood up to the Communistic threat for a half of a century, will survive. We will bind our nation's wounds with the enduring promise of liberty, and that your future, not yet written, will rebuke the calls for our destruction, and instead be replaced with an amazing journey where your uniqueness as a young woman will be celebrated, your hard work will be rejoiced as individual achievement rather than the collective, and that this nation, our nation, one nation under God will remain the beacon of liberty and justice for the world.



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