

Dear Friend,

Each year on the Fourth of July, Americans across the country get together with friends and family to commemorate the anniversary of our nation's freedom. Before the cook-outs start and the fireworks flare, let's reflect on the reasons July 4th is a day for both celebration and gratitude.

On this day 236 years ago, our Founding Fathers declared as a self-evident truth that "all men are created equal." Elegantly simple, yet astoundingly forward-thinking, our fledgling nation united behind this common dream of freedom and liberty – a dream that we vigorously and vigilantly continue to aspire to today.

But the rights of humankind to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" as proclaimed in our Declaration of Independence do not come without a price. As we celebrate the birthday of our democracy today, let us also remember and thank the brave men and women in our Armed Forces who risk – and too frequently make – the ultimate sacrifice, so that we may live free.

From the patriots who fought for independence in the Revolutionary War to our service members currently serving at home and abroad, these courageous Americans tirelessly fight to defend and preserve our everyday liberties. Recently, I was able to meet some of our American heroes when a local group of World War II veterans visited Washington D.C. on an Honor Flight. Like the generations before them and those who would come after, these great Americans personify why the United States remains a beacon of freedom for the world.

At Edwards Air Force Base on July 4, 1982, Ronald Reagan so eloquently identified that the greatness of America rests in the spirit of our citizens. "Through our history, we've never shrunk before a challenge," he said. "The pioneer spirit still flourishes in America. In the future, as in the past, our freedom, independence, and national well-being will be tied to new achievements, new discoveries, and pushing back new frontiers."

We will always face tough challenges as a nation. But the greatness of America rests in the strength, courage, and determination in all of us. Every year, the Fourth of July will reinvigorate our conviction that even in the face of great adversity, our common belief in freedom unites us, strengthens our hearts, and continues to make America the greatest democracy on earth.

Sincerely,

Congressman Kevin McCarthy