

Remembering Our Founders' Leadership

Written by Rep. Dave Loebsack
Tuesday, 18 September 2012 13:59

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On September 17th, 225 years ago, our Founders signed the document that laid the foundation of our government and provided the protection of rights for all citizens. On this day, we take time to celebrate Constitution Day, reflecting on what this great document means.

I keep two copies of the Constitution on my desk at all times – one given to me by the former Chief of the National Guard Bureau. I'm moved by the vision that our Founders had for our country, from the protection of individual freedoms, to the valuable role of states, to the checks and balances placed on our government.

While important amendments have been made to the Constitution, such as eliminating slavery and giving voting rights to all, it's still very much the same document our Founders signed 225 years ago. The principles and rights laid out in the Constitution made our country strong, and it's those same principals and rights that will keep our country strong.

How our Founders created the Constitution, crafting a graceful yet powerful document that millions have defended, at times giving their lives for, is almost as important as the document itself. For over four months our Founders vehemently debated this vision and in the end, compromise prevailed.

Our Founders compromised to move our country forward. For example, they compromised over difficult questions like if our legislature should be distributed equally between the states or proportionally - they decided one chamber for each.

The fact that our Constitution has been changed so little over all of these years underscores the fundamental principles of our Founders' vision. The protections and limits that the Constitution outlines, and the Bill of Rights that followed, must be defended. I believe we must work every day to uphold the rights it extends.

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I also deeply believe in our Founders' ability and willingness to find compromise in trying times with the future of our country dependent on it. We live in difficult times today. We face an economy struggling to recover, too many Iowans without work, and an unsustainable national debt.

We can overcome these trying times as well, just as we have before, but we must draw from our Founders' leadership. The political games and partisan bickering in Washington must stop. "No" is not a solution, and it doesn't put an Iowan back to work. Washington must work in favor of commonsense solutions that address our most pressing issues, not avoid them.

As a member of the Common Ground Caucus and through the numerous bipartisan pieces of legislation I have supported and pushed for, I know now is the time we must work together. I continue to stand ready to follow our Founders' lead to work with Democrats and Republicans alike to support any commonsense plan addressing the issues our country faces.

As Iowans, we know about compromise and working together. It's how we get things done. We don't help our neighbor based on ideology, we never ask. We only care if you're a Hawkeye or Cyclone. But even then, we will always lend a helping hand and find a way forward.

It's not surprising that Iowa was the first to recognize Constitution Day almost 100 years ago, requiring all students to learn about a document and process that has made our great nation what it is today. Iowans understand the value of the protections and rights laid out in the Constitution and the compromise it took to create such a timeless vision and maintain that vision for generations to come.

On this Constitution Day, it is my hope that Washington will take note of the same lessons Iowa students are learning today.

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