

"PUBLIC SENTIMENT IS EVERYTHING. WITH IT, NOTHING CAN FAIL;
WITHOUT IT, NOTHING CAN SUCCEED." ABRAHAM LINCOLN



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*Happy Birthday
America!*

"I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illumination, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more. You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this Declaration and support and defend these States. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the rays of ravishing light and glory. I can see that the end is more than worth all the means. And that posterity will triumph..." John Adams, July 3, 1776

The American Soul: Polarized...Still Persevering

Happy birthday, Shipmates! We hope our 29th annual greeting finds you well and, per John Adams, "...transported with enthusiasm" by our "great anniversary festival."

This year marked another special date in Freedom's march, **June 15th: the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta signing.** As one of the first documents to promote individual rights over the will of the sovereign, it motivated and inspired our founding fathers. How ironic (**Or is it destined?**) that this milestone occurs **during our Season of Liberty**, from Memorial Day thru Flag Day to The 4th.

Marking 800 years reminds us that at 239, our Declaration is still quite young... perhaps **we're going through our ornery adolescence** stage right about now! Whatever the cause, our American Soul feels deeply divided.

Of course, we've been here before...and thankfully no duels involving a Vice President and former Treasury secretary occurred recently! But our persistent **polarization** acts as a **spreading virus, infecting** the body politic.

So the grown-ups in the room, those of us in the "mature middle" need to **get angry—and act.** We're not void of principle; on the contrary, we actually want to *move* the country towards our views; **not just talk about a utopia that can never exist.** We understand getting 60-70% now is better than nothing.

We also understand **elections—and then governing well, of course—matter.** Get the policy wrong or squander the people's trust and eventually you'll pay a price. **The "all or nothing" approach works long-term only in dictatorships;** something those on the extremes conveniently forget. So they

threaten the very institutions of self-government with **shut-down or go-it-alone executive tactics that stab at the core** of our representative democracy.

Every time **Republicans "stick to their principles,"** they look mean, haughty and out of touch with reality. And when **Democrats "take a stand,"** they look militant and vindictive...and increasingly anti-rule-of-law and anti-Semitic.

Neither reflects the **true American Soul—fiercely competitive...until the fight is called.** Then we regroup, do what's expected and prep for the next round...because we remain the eternal **land of second chances** and new opportunities.

But today our political discourse routinely includes **"last chance" and calls for "revolution"**—a red-meat word the extremes of both sides eat up.

Maybe we *do* need a revolution...a **Revolution of Reason:**

★ **Demanding our state and national governments work.** Our leaders must walk that fine negotiating line to compromise that's not seen as capitulation. Our "statesmen" once understood this distinction. We must insist they re-learn it—and punish those who don't.

★ **Promoting those things that makes America what she is today...** (I prefer the term, "exceptional," but I know some bristle at such expression. So I mention it to bond with those who share my feelings and leave it in parenthesis to acknowledge those who don't...see, compromise!):

- **Personal freedom** based on the rule of law—with the commensurate responsibilities that come with that freedom.

- **The opportunity** (*not the guarantee*) to succeed—or fail—spectacularly. And then try it all again.
- The most unique combination of **immense military power and sincere human compassion** the world has ever known. We don't always get this mix right, but no civilization in recorded history is even comparable.
- The understanding that **true evil exists today** as it has in generations past. Only we can destroy it completely—**and we must.**

The extreme wings of our politics—the entertainers with microphones and those organizing destructive demonstrations—will disagree, dictating obedience to their dogma. In our Revolution of Reason, **let's relegate these blowhards to the fringes of civic discourse,** drown out by their own noises.

We'll choose progress over paralysis. The beauty of Freedom is she gives us a choice...each of America's attributes listed came from choices made by our founders, then passed on, one generation to the

next, **a testament to what's possible among free men and women.**

Moreover, history teaches **Freedom's alternative, in the long term, is doomed to failure.** As *The Wall Street Journal* columnist Bret Stephens wrote, autocratic rulers "...have no real answers, other than to administer, dictate and repress." But a society truly free to pursue the rewards—and endure the risks—of new ideas and innovations will always beat repressive regimes.

"Flexibility not hardness" is our true test of strength, Stephens wrote. **"Success is a result of experiment, not design... This is the American secret,** which we often forget because we can't imagine it any other way. It's why we are slightly shocked to find ourselves coming out ahead—even or especially when our presidents are feckless and our policies foolish. **We are larger than our leaders.** We are better than our politics. We are wiser than our culture."

Let's commit this Fourth to a renewal of reason to defend Freedom. Let's commit to the beauty and magic of The American Soul. May God always bless her.



Happy Independence Day!

Polly, Steve & Lindsay Kaufman
and Minnie, the Magnificent Chi-Mutt