

“Of the people, by the people, for the people,” this simple 9-word statement has held monumental significance for the American people throughout history since its inception. This phrase holds that our government is comprised of individuals from our population who, when chosen by their peers, will work to represent them in a fair, productive and positive manner. From the beginning, our country was a unique place, a land free of the chains of monarchy and one in which every individual could earn an honest and simple living. A democracy in which its leaders were chosen directly by the people and held accountable to their constituents. A vast land that endowed rights upon the people to protect them from a government meant to serve the common person, not merely a few elites. While all this may seem impeccably clear on the surface, it is not. Can a government really be “of the people, by the people, and for the people” if only a fraction of the population, who speak the loudest and most inflammatory bombard our thoughts and hold office? Can a government be “of the people, by the people, and for the people” if various subculture minorities are not included in it?

I believe one of the main grounds of division in our country is the harsh rhetoric displayed by our leaders towards social and economic inequality which then feeds the flames of hyper-partisan politics. With these abrasive oratories, our country has lost a sense of civility among ourselves and our respected position in the world. We have become disoriented with our conscience of voting for policy convictions and instead focusing on what coincides with party stance. Our leaders seem to be set not so much on the goal of raising up the American people, but instead to stall and hamper the other side of the political aisle. Unfortunately, our critical tones support and encourage the idea of “every person for themselves”. These fighting words bring out and unleash the undesirable qualities in each of us and as a result have borne an unprecedented time in partisan politics. Those not seeking the good of their neighbor and the

American public, in general, are commonplace and unfortunately the majority at this point in time in our political system.

I feel another source of segmentation within our nation is the economic inequality between the wealthiest of Americans and the rest of the population. How can a nation so rich in resources and income have so many families struggling merely to put food on the table? Hands outstretched with need spawn the far-reaching expanse of our country. The wealth gap has only grown wider and deeper throughout the last decades. Many communities throughout the country struggle to maintain a just living wage while others seek to expand their massive fortunes with, what at times appears to be, governmental blessings. The current system aims to help but with the gap growing more immense it is necessary to take drastic action to begin to bring the chasm into an acceptable range. The time is now when politics must be put aside. A bridge built on the backs of political adversaries should exist for all to safely cross this economic abyss.

Until everyone can be united as one, as our founding fathers intended, no change is likely in our foreseeable future. Our political system appears to be drifting apart by the day, week and year. It will take informed voting to turn the tide in electing moral, responsible leaders inclined to compromise and develop solutions. Leadership willing to negotiate for the good of the masses, not just the chosen few that already wield great power in the United States. Our country has the ability and means to help the disadvantaged and less fortunate, it is merely a matter of how much we are willing to sacrifice and work for this common goal. My generation are the next voters who have the power to change the political nature of our country. It is our choice in how we want our government to be formed and who will represent us and our values. Ours is a choice of what our national identity is and how we present it to the world. Our choice of what to seek and find in our leaders. Finally, our choice in who we want to become as

individuals will directly influence who we will become as a nation. The choice for each of us and our future is monumental, choose wisely.