

"This is how liberty dies. With thunderous applause."

Padme Amidala's famous line from *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* is famous.

It's haunting nature is increased when we look at the United States.
~~for its haunting nature. And what was our nation founded on? Liberty.~~

"... among these are Life, *Liberty*, and the pursuit of Happiness."¹

"... secure the Blessings of *Liberty* to ourselves and our Posterity..."²

"... with *liberty* and justice for all."³

Do you see the critical words there?

~~I would personally argue that all of those words were intentionally chosen when the Pledge was written, but I want to draw your attention especially to the last two words of the Pledge of Allegiance. The words that should be left ringing in our ears as we sit back down in our seats to carry on with the school day "For all."~~

as the Pledge of allegiance concludes — "for all"!
~~Liberty and justice for all!~~

Watching the inauguration today—knowing some of the executive orders being signed into law—I couldn't help thinking about Padme Amidala's famous line from *Star Wars Episode III*. Admittedly, every time a new President has taken office since 2005, I've been made to think about this line, but *this movie came out in* after the executive orders today *it's taken on a whole new meaning.*

Embed this link

Now please don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm not calling President Trump Emperor Palpatine. My prayers are with the man, that he would grow in wisdom and love as he exercises

¹ The Declaration of Independence (1776). Emphasis added.

² The United States Constitution (1787), Preamble. Emphasis added.

³ The Pledge of Allegiance (1954). Emphasis added. The last clause has existed since 1892.

responsibility as the 47th President. But there *is* time to draw a comparison between Padme's words and our founding documents. And not only is there time. It is *needed*.

The Declaration of Independence

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, *Liberty*, and the pursuit of Happiness."⁴

This document ~~established~~ ^{declared} our ~~independence~~ ^{separation} from England and resulted in a war. While it is true that this document, despite its statement that "all men are created equal," did nothing to end the scourge of ~~slavery~~ ^{racism (African, Native American, etc.)} (let alone racism) plaguing our nation, MLK referred to the Declaration of Independence as applying to all Americans in his "I Have a Dream" speech.⁵

But note the Declaration of Independence. It uses universal language. It does not specify "American citizens." It specifies "all men," which naturally includes all women and all who identify by some other gender as well. "All men" are all people, irregardless of national identity.

I have a dream that someday we will recognize this and stop dehumanizing those different from us. ~~our Dehumanization~~

The Preamble to the Constitution

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure [*sic*] domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence [*sic*], promote the

⁴ The Declaration of Independence (1776). Emphasis added.

⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have A Dream" (1963), paragraph 4.

<https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>

general Welfare, and *secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity*, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”⁶

This document officially founded our nation. And while many conservatives want to emphasize the “domestic Tranquility” line by ~~emphasizing~~ ^{documenting} the dangers of immigrants, ^{illegals} ^{pose to American citizens,} ⁷ this kind of rhetoric ignores the fact that many immigrants are merely trying to escape a dangerous situation ⁱⁿ their home country, ^{to} make a better life for their family, ^{lives} to truly experience freedoms they’ve never experienced before. To ^{view} ~~treat~~ all immigrants as dangers to our nation, ^{threatening} promising to export them all, is a ~~terribly un-nuanced perspective~~ ^{incredibly dehumanizing}. We ~~are~~ all immigrants ourselves at one point, ^{are} ^{ing} and we now enjoy the blessings of liberty, longing to pass these blessings to our posterity ^{know or are descended from} (or we already have) as well. ^{We should strive to make it easier for them to become legal, not vilify their attempts because of a backward government.}

If we uphold “domestic tranquility” by ~~inadvertently exporting~~ ^{indiscriminately deporting} all illegal immigrants, this will negatively affect “the general welfare,” which is also the language of the Constitution. ^{And} ^(Without the immigrants who work the agricultural jobs, all the promises of lower-cost groceries will go unfulfilled.) it makes a mockery of “the blessings of liberty” that the Declaration of Independence said was “for all.” ^{will be simplified}

I have a dream that the process to become a legal immigrant is ~~simplified~~ ^{deportation}, so that only convicted criminals with ill-intent might experience ~~exportation~~ from the United States of America.

The Pledge of Allegiance

⁶ The United States Constitution (1787), Preamble. Emphasis added.

⁷ Note the tone of Megan Basham, “Illegal Immigration: Strangers, Neighbors, and Aliens,” in *Shepherds for Sale: How Evangelical Leaders Traded the Truth for a Leftist Agenda* (New York: HarperCollins, 2024), 31-50. She starts the chapter by describing a tragic occurrence at the hands (and vehicle) of an illegal immigrant, which serves as an emotional appeal to get her readers to agree with everything she writes afterwards.

"I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, *with liberty and justice for all.*"⁸

Most conversations about the "Pledge of Allegiance" revolve around the inclusion of the phrase "under God." However, ~~I want to focus on the last clause. Again, the pledge reiterates that our nation stands for "liberty and justice for all."~~ ~~And it is lamentable that people don't know this. We're supposed to recite this every day at the start of the school day, with our hand over our heart, but kids just sit in class scrolling their phones.~~

If we break down the pledge grammatically, the flag stands for the nation and the nation has "liberty and justice for all." Again, not simply Americans. It has *liberty* for all who would seek shelter and security ^{with} in our borders.

I have a dream of ^{American citizens working for} liberty and justice *for all.*

Conclusion

America used to be called a melting pot, and while it is true that the people coming in aren't melting into the "American mold" anymore—flying flags of their country of origin, following traditions from their homeland, failing to learn the ^{official} language of the USA—perhaps part of this is because we view everyone who looks different from us with suspicion. If they're not truly welcome here, it's no wonder they cling to things from where they are welcome.

But the problem isn't solved by kicking them out. The solution is making it easier to become a legal immigrant.

⁸ The Pledge of Allegiance (1954). Emphasis added. The last clause has existed since 1892.

* footnote explaining truth + sharing link.

that debate is a real herring that distracts from the point of the Pledge of Allegiance.

liberty
While it is true that this is not—and never was—a founding document in our country, it was meant to be a formative document—proven by the fact we recite it every day in school. What it should be forming our citizens into is people who believe in "liberty and justice for all"—not egotistical, ethnocentric individuals. But alas, students today sit on their phones instead of standing and reciting the pledge.

However, given our track record as Americans, we'd still view legal immigrants with suspicion.

~~But even making them legal immigrants doesn't ultimately answer that problem.~~ What

we really need is to again become the *United* States of America. But that's a blog for another day.