

Why I'm Proud to be an American

By Eliot P. Sands

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When I was asked why I was proud to be an American, I first considered what might not make one proud. One cannot be proud that when the Constitution was written, slaves were counted as 3/5 of a person. One would not be proud of the fact that women were treated like property, and were not given an equal voice. One could not be proud of the fact that men who did not own property couldn't vote. One could hardly be proud of the way Native Americans were treated.

But I *am* proud to be an American. I am proud of how the founders established a form of government that allowed itself to correct its mistakes. I am proud that America runs on principles of fairness and equality; individuals vote and voices matter.

America rights its wrongs by being open to new views and a variety of opinions. Political commentary and bands like *Green Day* criticize politicians in ways that would be banned in some countries. I value being able to think what I want to think, ask questions, and come to my own conclusions. Ordinary Americans like Rose Parks and Susan B. Anthony have stood up for their rights and made sure that they were treated fairly. Their words and actions changed history drastically.

I stand in line when my parents vote with people of both genders and a rainbow of races choosing who they want to lead the country. Suffragettes marched and protested until the Constitution was amended in 1920. Today the top two members of the New Hampshire legislature are women.

I am proud to live in a community and country that welcomes immigrants with open arms. This month, the President nominated Sonia Sotomayor to become a Supreme Court Justice. Her parents came to the Bronx from Puerto Rico. She has Type 1 diabetes, like me, but she has never let that interrupt her dreams.

I am proud to be an American because we offer liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all, not just some. By "pursuit of happiness" the founders meant that everyone had a right to try for success. The current President, Barack Obama, traveled a long road to success. When he found it, he was in the White House

Granted, America hasn't always been perfect, but it's always getting better. That's why I'm proud to be an American.