



For Immediate Release

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Lincoln Day

On June 16, 1858 a 51-year old lawyer stood before the Illinois Republican Party and accepted their nomination to run against Stephen Douglas for the United States Senate. In his speech Abraham Lincoln told his party that “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” He was right. Three years later Civil War would tear this country in half and it would be four more years of Americans spilling the blood of other Americans to put it back together.

Abraham Lincoln knew when he took office that he was facing a nation divided over the issue of slavery. By the time of his inauguration seven states had announced their secession from the Union. Within months the country that he was elected to preserve, protect and defend; was at war with itself. For four years Lincoln fought to show all Americans that we are better as one unit than we could ever be separately. He reached across the aisle, to friend and foe alike and showed them that no matter what our differences, we are better as a Union than we are separately. The common themes of Lincoln’s life and his presidency were togetherness, inclusion and Union above all else. With blood, sweat and tears he succeeded in saving this country.

The celebration of Abraham Lincoln is in every way the celebration of the United States itself. Both were born of humble beginnings, Lincoln on a farm in Kentucky, he didn’t hide from hard work, splitting rails by day. But he also didn’t settle for the life of a farmer. He wanted something more for himself and his future. So he set about reading the law at night and was admitted to the Illinois Bar. His story is the celebration of sweat, hard work, and perseverance. His story is the celebration of the things that make this country great.

Like any human he had his stumbles along the way, famously suffering two defeats in campaigns for the Senate. But in 1860, that self made rail splitting lawyer was elected President of the United States. That, ladies and gentlemen is an American Success Story. In the five years that followed his words and actions made it clear “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

I believe that in trying times we as Americans can learn from the lessons of Abraham Lincoln. After all, despite the problems that we have, our politicians have never had to face something like secession or a Civil War. But even if our problems pale in comparison, we can still look to Lincoln’s solutions. We must remember that we are all

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Americans. It is the common thread shared by us all. America isn't rich or poor. It's not black or white. It doesn't care where you were born it only cares that you can be anything that you want to be.

Friends, we all have a vested interest in tomorrow. And the only way that we can make that tomorrow better is by working together. We can't allow divisiveness in this country because then, everybody loses.

Can you imagine what Lincoln would say about that?

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