



2013-2014 Voice of Democracy Contest

Why I'm Optimistic About our Nation's Future"

Illinois

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Benghazi, illegal spying by the NSA, the targeting of conservative Americans by the IRS...I watch the news, and it seems that our Country is plagued by turmoil and strife. Trayvon Martin, the Fort Hood massacre, the Boston bombing...I watch the news and it seems that our Country is overwhelmed by hate and division. It would be easy for me (a high school senior) to be pessimistic about the nation's future and fearful of my own, and yet I'm not. I'm just the opposite actually. Why may you ask? Let me tell you the story of the USS America, and you will clearly see why, like me, you too should be optimistic about this Nation's future.

Inspired by architects such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, the blueprints of a vessel unlike any the world has seen before were crafted. Held captive by tyrannical English moorings, thousands of people willingly sacrificed their lives to release her binds while yelling in unison "In God We Trust!" Following the command of her Captain, George Washington, they raised the red, white, and blue sails adorned with stars and stripes as they set sail for history with the Constitution to guide the way.

She was constructed from freedom and liberty, and in over 200 years, she's never sunk. On her hull, the following words are emblazoned, "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."

She's only run aground once on the rocky shores of the Civil War. During this time, she was torn in half as the current of slavery pulled her to and fro against the jagged rocks. This is the closet she's ever come to sinking. That is until Abraham Lincoln guided her to deeper waters using the tide of emancipation to break her bondage while freeing all.

The winds of time carry her to lands of prosperity and through storms of adversity that riddle her to the core, but the crew never withers, and her body never breaks from the strain. Facing tsunamis such as the Great Depression, two World Wars, and two fallen towers, she sails onward...constantly and consistently moving forward. She may bend, but she never breaks, and though she sometimes loses her way, she is eventually led back on course by her unwavering compass, the Constitution.

This is why I'm optimistic. I'm a crew member of the USS America, and because of her history, I know this ship will always cut through murky waters and weather all storms. When I look behind from where we have come, I am no longer afraid to look ahead to where we are going. It's not that the ship is unsinkable, but rather, her crew refuses to allow it to sink. Yes, we have strife, and the love of many grows cold, but when the winds roar and the waves threaten, we pull together. The eradication of slavery's evil was supplanted by the triumphant election of our nation's first black President. The carnage of two World Wars birthed our nation's greatest generation who freed millions from German oppression, and the heart of mankind rose from the rubble of two fallen towers as evidenced by the courageous firemen and policemen who thought nothing of their own safety while rescuing others. But mostly, I'm optimistic because this country is still the Land of the Free, the Home of the Brave, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. I know that when the skies grow dark and the waves threaten, we will resolutely stand on the bow of the USS America while reciting the same words our forefathers did before us; "In God We Trust."