

Let Us Never Forget

By Jerry Grzeca and John Sesini
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"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands."

These words are scrolled onto the very document that the United States uses to govern this great nation: the Declaration of Independence. Congress included immigration in the Declaration because they understood that immigration would be the future building block of our nation. They believed that immigration into the United States was a right and not a privilege.

Before the signing of the Declaration, the US consisted of 13 colonies under the rule of Great Britain's King George III. During this time, there was growing unrest in the colonies concerning the taxes that had to be paid to England, otherwise known as "Taxation without Representation." The colonists did not have any representation in the English Parliament and had no say in what went on but were still forced to pay taxes to the King. Along with their fight against unjust taxation, Congress also fought against the King's attempt to restrict immigration to the colonies. Congress understood that the United States was a nation of immigrants, and thus the prevention of immigration was listed in the Declaration as a right that needed protection, not prevention.

For almost a full year, Congress tried to work out its differences with England without formally declaring war. However, by June 1776, their efforts had become hopeless and a committee was formed to compose a formal declaration of independence. After various changes, a vote was taken late

in the afternoon of July 4th. Of the 13 colonies, 9 voted in favor of the Declaration. To make it official, John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence signifying America's newfound freedom.

Today, Independence Day, the Fourth of July, is a day when families gather together, enjoying the smell of hotdogs and burgers wafting in the air and the sounds and sights of brightly colored fireworks bursting over tree tops. We eat, we drink, we relax, and often we forget why we celebrate this day. We tend to forget that our freedom to partake in and enjoy this day is due to our Founding Fathers' persistence and fight for these liberties.

In particular for new immigrants, the Fourth of July has become a significant day. For those who lack basic freedoms in their own country, there is a glimmer of hope contained within our Declaration: "...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."

With the current state of immigration in the United States - laws that encourage racial profiling, the unfairness against immigrants with hate crimes, and the crackdown at our borders - our Founding Fathers would be astonished to know that the protection of immigration, a cause for which they nobly fought to protect, is being challenged. Let us remember that Independence Day isn't only about freedom for those individuals who were born in the U.S., but rather it was written to protect all individuals, "We the people," who want to live in this great nation.

To all naturalized citizens and to those of you seeking immigration that have not yet joined us, we wish you a very happy Fourth of July. Let us never forget that the Declaration of Independence was written with all of us in mind.

For more information about obtaining U.S. citizenship or for information on any other immigration issues or concerns, please contact Grzeca Law Group at (414) 342-3000 or visit our website at www.grzecalaw.com.

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