

## ESSAY PAGE

America is in the midst of an identity crisis that has no precedent amongst my generation. Whereas America was long looked upon as a just and compassionate nation, we are currently bombarded with seemingly endless images of political turmoil, social unrest, and economic fragility right here at home. Many of my generation have lost faith in America, and bitterly convinced themselves that America is "finished" or "on the way out". They say the world has lost interest in us and we are simply a tyrannical state collapsing inwards on ourselves. Everyday I see and hear this type of pessimism and it cuts me to my very soul because these individuals cannot fathom how great this country is and how blessed they are to live here.

In my mind, America is much more than the place I was born or the place that I live. America to me, transcends geography and becomes the last great hope for humanity. This is a country where opportunity is endless to all that seek it out. It is a country where equality is held head and shoulders above petty differences. Most importantly though, it is a country where liberty is not a privilege to be squandered, but a fundamental human right for all. I love this country with every fiber of my being because we are, and always will be, a free nation. Not only are we free, but we desire to spread the liberties we enjoy, and too often take for granted, to those around the world who are hidden away under the darkness of oppression. We do not place this monumental task upon our shoulders because it is the easy thing to do, or the popular thing to do. We have undertaken this mission because it is the right and just thing to do, not just for ourselves but also for the betterment of all humanity.

If you are one of those individuals who feel there is nothing right with America, then you have simply failed to open your eyes to what America truly is. In America, if you wish to voice dissent against the government, you are allowed to free from repercussions. If you dream of owning your own land, operating your own business, or pursuing a lifelong dream, you are not only free to do so, but encouraged as well. You may campaign and vote for the political candidates of your choosing, practice whichever religion you desire, educate your children in the manner you see fit, and thousands of other rights guaranteed by our incredible and unparalleled Constitution and Bill of Rights.

I am proud of this country because we constantly strive to better ourselves and the world around us. I am proud of this country because we are founded on, and live by, just and moral principles. I am grateful to this nation for everything it has done for me and I will defend my country to the end because it is the greatest nation in the world.