

Why I am Optimistic about Our Nation's Future

As a young adult I am optimistic about America's future due to the new generation of leaders emerging from soldiers who served from Kandahar to Sadr City that are now returning home. Many of the great leaders in the history of our country were soldiers, soldiers who understood firsthand what was at stake when they served their country. They gave without regard to their own safety, in order that our nation would continue to be the "land of the free and home of the brave".

Many of the soldiers returning home now from places like Afghanistan and Iraq know better than anyone about sacrifice. I believe that Americans will start to understand that the soldiers who return with a shattered mind deserve the same support and respect that those who return with a shattered body. We need to help them and their families, providing excellent medical care and counseling and continuing the GI bill, letting those want to go to college do so so that they can further help to make our nation the greatest in the world.

We all need to join the fight for freedoms for all of our citizens. It is my hope that like the integration of military in 1948, the rest of America will follow the example in the fight for same sex civil rights in the future. The right to marry whomever you choose, the right to be able to go to school without fear of being bullied, the right to be able to stand up and speak your mind without retaliation, the right to own a firearm and be able to use it to protect yourself, your property and your family. And now more than ever, we are standing up as a nation and saying these freedoms and rights are intended for all of our citizens, and those who may have differences are coming together in a common goal.

We have seen some of the finest moments in humanity come in the wake of terrible tragedy. Events like Super Storm Sandy, which took a hefty toll on only one area of our nation, brought us together. People from all over the country came to New York and New Jersey to help. They sent food, they sent money, they sent clothing and they sent their thoughts and prayers to all those who lost their homes or loved ones to a terrible natural disaster. We have seen people who just ran 26.2 miles run to a local hospital to donate blood to victims of a bombing attack at the finish of the Boston Marathon. For me it is heartening that with the recent difficulties whether natural or man made, Americans run towards the sound of danger; it is simply in our nature.

Many of the battles we face are right here at home, and as a nation, we must join together to fight them. Everyday citizens are impelled to act. Kids are taught "if you see something, say something" whether it involves bullying, or violence or crime. Everyone has a voice, even if it comes in the electronic form. The Internet, Facebook and Twitter have had a huge impact on how we share information and can bring light to a situation far from where you live, but still important enough for you to become involved.

I continue to be optimistic about our future for so many reasons, and I know that the next generation of great leaders is being forged on battlefields around the world, as many of our historic leaders have been. I know that we as American citizens, especially young people like myself, are becoming more involved in our government and standing up for what is right and what we believe in. And that should make everyone more optimistic.