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Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All

I want you to think, really think about the biggest problem in our country. Gallup polls would say inflation, healthcare, and immigration are the three most pressing things on this country's mind. But I would like to suggest something entirely different. Our biggest issue is that we are too divided to realize what brings us together. And in America, it can be hard. Our entire philosophy is that we are a melting pot, so while other countries can find unity based on race, culture, or philosophy, the only thing that unites America is that we're all American. Patriotism, like everything else, has become a victim of tireless culture wars. While today patriotism feels like just another buzzword further dividing us, the sacrifice of Dr. Warren, a revolutionary war patriot who gave everything he had reminds us that patriotism is a deep and true *love* for our country extending beyond any superficial differences. And I believe, patriotism is the only thing that can save our country. America can benefit from patriotism by letting it bring us together instead of apart, giving us a pride in our country that inspires us to make it better, and bringing us an opportunity to put differences aside for the sake of progress

While it may seem just the opposite, patriotism can bring us together. Just a couple nights ago, I watched the state of union with vain hope about a successful, cooperative, and mature meeting. I was disappointed (but not surprised) to watch the men and women running our country attack not only each other's policy, but personality and even families. Despite this ugliness, one beauty stuck with me, President Biden proudly proclaimed "This is America, and




we are all American". In *Saving Dr. Warren, A True Patriot*, Steve O'Dell is an eighth grade student who sees patriotism as only a Pledge of Allegiance that he gave "without any meaning, no thought, no feeling, and certainly not remembering what it meant" (Mckenna 18).

Unfortunately, this is what patriotism is often reduced to. But its true meaning is as Dr. Warren defines it, is "giving your last full measure of devotion" (Mckenna 27). This means to be proud of your country, give it all you can give, and be not only willing, but honored to defend it with your life.

Once we can understand what patriotism is, we can use the pride we have in our nation to make it better. Often, patriotism is simply touted as a blind approval of every bill, budget and policy, or having the biggest American flag on your porch. But as Thomas Jefferson told us so many years ago "dissent is the highest form of patriotism". Today this means that it is our responsibility to have enough pride in our country to hold our leaders accountable. We can show patriotism by using our voice in government, by educating ourselves, writing to elected officials, and most importantly, exercising our right to vote. Even though it's years before I can vote for my president, it's still important to me to do small things to take pride in my country. Things like picking up trash to keep our sanctuary beautiful and simply remembering those who fought for my freedom is enough. While Dr. Warren gave his "last full measure of devotion" (Mckenna 34) Steve still showed patriotism by "thanking those who came before him" (Mckenna 234).

When we use the pride we have in our country to unify us, and make our country better, not only can we achieve goals at home, we can help countries abroad. After 9/11 none of our trivial differences of left and right mattered—we simply came together to help those we could and comfort those we couldn't. All around the world countries rushed to our aid, to form a mourning and protective hug around our injured nation. While global superpowers gave millions of dollars,



Kenya gave something equally important. They gave their 14 best cows, all that they had.

America is indebted to all the billions of people who helped us in our time of need, great and small. When we unite as a country under patriotism we can work together to pay back these debts of kindness and lead the world forward, to the brighter future the “American Dream” stands for.

Just like my great grandfathers who fought for our country's freedom, my granpop who held our country to its highest standard as a park ranger, or my aunt who crossed seas to come live the american dream, I love my country. And because I love my country I will do everything I can to make it better, through patriotism, to help it live up to Dr. Warren's dream. So I, and my children can really truly know what it means to live in one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Work Cited:

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