What Patriotism Means to Me

Patriotism is commonly understood to be love for and devotion to one's country, but to me, patriotism is more than that. It is a passionate commitment to the ideals upon which our great nation was founded. Patriotism is a joyful belief in the American principles that all people are created equal and with inalienable rights such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
Because my patriotism is built on the bedrock of these ideals, it does not ebb and flow with the tide of each election result, policy initiative, or stock market swing.

It is imperative that patriotism be neither blind nor complacent. True patriotism is proud of America's accomplishments yet still keen to remedy its shortcomings; these are two sides of the same coin. In America, patriotism is a love of freedom: freedom to speak, worship, love, work, and assemble.

Freedom is a special privilege and patriotism means never taking this privilege for granted. Human history demonstrates that the type of freedom we enjoy in this country is both fragile and rare. Patriotism means not only a love of this freedom but also a willingness to defend it.

And defend it we must, with actions as well as with words. True patriotism displays itself in deeds. Deeds that put country first. Grand deeds such as members of our armed forces making the ultimate sacrifice for our country. And small deeds such as voting, engaging in civic debate, or performing community service.

Patriotism is more than a love of country. It is a heartfelt, spirited, and steadfast allegiance to the principles of our great nation that does not fluctuate with the daily news headlines. And while patriotism rests on virtuous principles such as liberty and equality, it must be guided by wisdom and critical reflection. Patriotism is a celebration of freedom inextricably interwoven with a willingness to defend it. To me, patriotism is palpable and is revealed in our thoughts, our words, and our actions.