

“I have a dream”, a speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr during the 1963 March on Washington, was a defining moment in American history advocating for civil rights and equality for all. King believed that Americans of different races should have equal rights, and that they can coexist together peacefully as one nation.

Much like King, I also have a dream. I have a dream that political division will no longer dominate the United States. I have a dream that Americans will stop viewing one another as enemies simply because of differing political beliefs. I have a dream that when problems arise in the United States, both parties, regardless of ideology, will work together as one people to solve the problem. The strength of the United States has always originated from its citizens. For nearly 250 years, Americans have built this nation brick by brick, speech by speech, and vote by vote. They have worked together to build farms, infrastructure, and to educate the youth of America. However, the problem still remains. Political hostility is overshadowing us from the real issues that are facing our nation today. From homelessness in major cities to rising violence and instability. Division has become louder than cooperation, and what once was the United States risks becoming the Divided States.

My power is limited. I am a 15 year old in Thompson Connecticut. Both of my parents had immigrated from Poland after the fall of communism in search of a better life. I cannot vote, I cannot sign bills. My single vote cannot sway the decisions that can lead to a brighter future in America.

However, I can do so much more that I often overlooked. I can protest, march, and speak freely about the problems and division in the United States. In many nations, the ability to seek change in the government, in the way of life, and in education has been restricted or silenced. Millions of people cannot fathom having this ability, and yet those who have it, don't always show appreciation for it. In the United States, we are fortunate that civic participation is not only allowed but protected.

As I get older, and endure in my educational endeavors, I hope to utilize my rights. I hope to vote, to stay informed, and to advocate for what I believe in. Former President Barack Obama once stated at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston, “There's not a liberal America and a conservative America - there's the United States of America.” This single statement reflects the same spirit and vision of unity that King had fought for decades earlier. While disagreement will occur in democracy, the hostility does not have to be. Over the past decade, political discourse has grown increasingly divided, even shifting focus away from collaboration and toward conflict. What was one a blue donkey, and a red elephant, politics have become polarizing and have divided millions.

Like Martin Luther King Jr, I firmly believe that this country has an immense problem. But I also believe that these challenges can be overcome if Americans remember that they share a common identity and a common future. My dream is not for a nation without any differences, after all, differences have shaped our nation and are a part of what the United States was founded upon. Instead, I envision a future where our country's differences will strengthen us, not divide us. If our nation is united, there is no obstacle that we cannot overcome together.