

Badger Institute: A special message from President Mike Nichols

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Most of the Declaration of Independence was a litany of grievances against King George III. The language was pretty stark – “He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns and destroyed the lives of our people.” But also timelessly eloquent – “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” Here, though, is what strikes me most this year as I reread it. It was a declaration not just of independence but of common cause, a way of forging together an often fractious people.

The last line, in fact, was a pledge to each other of “their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.” It seems we live today in a nation of grievance and it is the right – even the obligation at times – of Americans to speak out as they see fit. But it seems to us here too that we should never forget our commonality, our shared history, the unalienable right all of us have to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is truly an exceptional country for all who are lucky enough to live here.

From all of us here at the Badger Institute, we hope you have a great Independence Day as we celebrate our shared blessings.