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October 24, 2023

### What are the Greatest Attributes of our Democracy?

“The purpose of government is to enable the people of a nation to live in safety and happiness. Government exists for the interest of the governed, not for the governors.” These words of wisdom were spoken by someone who truly understood how a government should work and the true meaning of what it means to live in this great Nation - Thomas Jefferson.

The word democracy comes from the Greek words, “demos” meaning people and “kratos” meaning power, so simply defined is power of the people. When governing a group of people, what makes democracy work, and what makes it great: Diversity, Opportunity, and Checks and Balances.

Diversity created our democracy. Not diversity of religion or skin color, but rather diversity of ideas. This diversity of ideas led to Benjamin Franklin asking Thomas Jefferson to amend the Declaration of Independence to include that, “these truths are self-evident that all men are created equal.” The failure to adhere to the diversity of ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence, almost led to the collapse of the United States in the years leading up to the Civil War, because we left some of our brothers and sisters out of the equation. Our blindness to the meaning of Benjamin Franklin’s words threatened our Nation as we now know it. The United States had a hard lesson to learn, but this ultimately made our country stronger. The thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments guarantee that truly all men are created equal and have equal rights in this country.

Opportunity has bred our democracy. Capitalism and the creation of society's greatest economy has fed generations of hard-working Americans in their pursuit of the American Dream. Opportunity has created great wealth, great men and women, and great stories of inspiration.

Checks and Balances ensures democracy. The decision of our founding fathers to avoid a monarchical style of government, and instead follow an experimental Democratic Republic model, has enabled the longevity of our democracy. The foundation of this model is the "check and balance" system. Each branch of government has an important role and equal power. Our Legislative, Judicial, and Executive branches of government form a triangle to balance each other out. This presents our nation as a nation of laws, and a democracy that's truly led by an equal representation of its people.

So, diversity created democracy. Opportunity grew democracy. Checks and Balances ensures democracy. Without these foundational structures of diversity, opportunity, and checks and balances, you get governmental systems that subvert the will of the people. Democracy puts the people in the center, while other forms of government like an oligarchy or an authoritarian style reject the common good of the people.

The last greatest attribute to our democracy is... me. I am an attribute to democracy. I, and the generation I represent, are the torch bearers. Using the roadmap paved by all those who have come before us, we are the ones standing before you, ready to learn from the mistakes and triumphs of the past, and ready to set the way for generations to come.