

Anna Walburger
Voice of Democracy - 2020

The year is 2012. A much younger version of myself sits in my third grade classroom among my peers. It is our favorite part of the day. Why, you may ask? It's the time our teacher plays the catchiest, most epic hit of our 8 year old lives -- that's right, the Schoolhouse Rock version of the Preamble to the Constitution.

To this day, the words are forever etched into my mind, still set to that same memorable tune -- "We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union..."

I imagine the founding fathers intentions and thoughts as they met to pen this prodigious document, the keystone of our nation. The culmination of years of resistance to tyranny, confrontation of injustice, and thirst for liberty. I imagine the hope in their eyes and the pride in their hearts as they tried to conceptualize what this nation would become. Their "more perfect" union.

Today, 233 years later, I can say that America is not what the Founding Fathers envisioned.

I don't think they could have envisioned millions of elementary school children singing the Preamble as part of a top-notch education system.

I don't think they could have envisioned world-changing American inventions like supercomputers in our pockets, or virtually ordering any item you can think of, and it appearing on your doorstep the next day.

Truly, I don't think they could have envisioned the level of privilege, security, and freedom that we are blessed to enjoy today.

So, no. This is not the America the Founding Fathers envisioned. It is everything they envisioned -- and more.

They set out to form a “more perfect union” for themselves and their posterity, and they did just that. As the country progressed, strengthened, protected its ideals, and thrived, so did this notion. With confidence, I can say that America is now continuing to mold it’s “even more perfect union.” A nation that has evolved to greater heights than could have ever been foreseen.

I think back to the Declaration of Independence -- Jefferson’s bold exclamation that we were done with Britain’s oppression, and the first step towards the sovereign nation we know today. The infamous line, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal” reverberated throughout the world, as institutions such as caste systems, slavery, racism, sexism, and monarchial rules dominated societies. This daring claim was deemed radical, unheard of for it’s time. And yet, this was just the start.

Jefferson foresaw an America free of tyrant rulers, a place where all white, land owning men, could be held equal. Not only has this vision been fulfilled, but America’s thirst for equality did not stop there.

In the America I know today, men of all races, religions, wealth, and types of expression are held equal, not only to each other, but to women of all races, religions, wealth, and expressions.

Soon, I will exercise my right to vote, to wield my power to shape our society. Brave women serve heroically in the armed forces. People of all races and color participate boldly in government. Our youth exercise their right to speak out for what they believe in.

This is the progression of our “even more” perfect union, an America that continues to elaborate on the dream of equality started by our founding fathers.

At the time of the signing of the Constitution, this new republic consisted of 13 colonies along the Atlantic ocean, and 4 million proud Americans.

Today, 50 states stretching across the continent, and 328 million Americans, all enjoy the ideals set into action at the birth of our nation. A republic in size, in reach, in strength that would have been too audacious to even imagine in the 1770s.

Unbelievable.

However, these American ideals were not kept reserved for just 13 colonies or 50 states. No, our country's reach and influence has been far greater.

From a small militia made of farmers and townspeople, to a mighty military force of courageous men and women, who our lives are forever indebted to.

Unimaginable.

From a group of leaders without any representation in Parliament, to the country that founded the United Nations and continues to further democracy and freedom around the globe.

Unprecedented.

From a country of colonists subject to a throne, to a country that stands as an exemplar to the nations, with immigrants from all over the world coming to attain the American dream within our borders

Unfathomable.

But, with respect and strength comes responsibility. Has our country always been perfect in our efforts to support equality and freedom? No.

But, in our ongoing efforts to improve, does our country strive to overcome mistakes and do better for its people? Yes.

The Founding Fathers set out to form a “more perfect union.” An ambitious goal, a journey, rather than a destination. The road to perfection is a bumpy one, filled with trials, mistakes, second chances, and triumphs, but one they were willing to take to create a “more perfect” world for themselves, and their posterity. Today, the citizens and leaders of this great nation continue to mold an America the founding fathers never could have envisioned. An America of power, of peace, of freedom, of improvement -- our “even more” perfect union.