

Why I Am an American Patriot

The word “patriot” comes from the Greek word *patrios*, which means of one’s father. Since my father is Italian, and I was born and lived in Italy up until last year, Italy is basically my fatherland. There, it is very challenging for me to write about being an American patriot. However, I think patriotism is not all about knowing the Pledge of Allegiance by heart.

During the past year, I have studied and passed the U.S. Constitution and the Illinois State Constitution tests and learned a lot about citizenship, laws, branches of government, and the principles on which the United States was formed. In the preamble to the Constitution, I learned that the principles of freedom and independence are very important for this country. These are important also in Italy and they are very important principles for me.

I enjoy my freedoms and I am happy that I have always been able to enjoy these rights. I understand there are some countries that don’t have this privilege. Just today I saw the news about the country of Myanmar, which was formally Burma, that monks were protesting peacefully against the repressive military regime that controls the country. Nine monks were shot and many badly injured as they walked through the streets praying. There is no freedom of speech in that country and there is no democracy.

I believe a real American patriot believes deeply in the universal freedoms described by the words of the founding fathers. “We hold certain Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” I believe a real American Patriot should support these words, live these words and try to put them into action. I am only in eighth grade and I can’t go to Myanmar to protest for their rights, but I can apply these principles in my classroom, in my town and on my hockey team. Everyone should be able to enjoy their unalienable rights and that’s what patriotism is for me.

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