

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SOUTH DAKOTA VOICE OF
DEMOCRACY WINNER

HON. TIM JOHNSON

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 19, 1996

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Nicole Sanderson of Wagner, SD, was recently selected as a State winner in the Voice of Democracy broadcast script writing contest conducted each year by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its ladies auxiliary. The contest theme for this year was answering America's call, and of the more than 116,000 secondary school students who participated in this year's contest, Nicole was also named a winner at the national level. Mr. Speaker, I ask that Nicole's winning script be reprinted in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. She deserves to be commended for her exceptional efforts in writing this script and participating in this contest. Nicole's insights and enthusiasm will serve as a model to others her age.

ANSWERING AMERICA'S CALL

(By Nicole Sanderson, Post 7319, WAGNER, SD)

Alexander Hamilton once said, "The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself; and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power." Not in the course of human events would one discover a more substantial remark or a clearer understanding of the prospect of the American dream than that of Alexander Hamilton's. Hamilton truly believed that the so-called "American experiment" would succeed and over generations would prove to be a powerful existence. Hamilton realized that to simply live under the wrath of tyranny with no objections would be surrendering the

very rights he deemed necessary, but to fight for the rule of one's own hand was justification for every rebellion in the cause for justice and freedom.

In the two hundred years since our forefathers signed the Constitution, America has gained the respect of those very nations who believed we were a failing idea from the start. She has grown to be the strong, influential nation Hamilton and many others had foreseen, regarding with utmost respect those ideas we were founded on. Today, however, America is lacking the respect from her own citizens that we once so eagerly prided ourselves on.

Many Americans have turned to the idea of hatred, deceit, and revenge. But why? Has the American dream failed them or have they simply failed the American dream? With crime rate on a drastic increase and disregard for the law a common occurrence, Americans have lost the sense of direction that the founders of this great country so generously provided and intended for us. We must not sit back and watch as the destruction of our country continues, but we must speak out to those who are disrespectful to the constitution and to the American people. We must prove to them that America is not the villain they see, but merely one modest voice in the choir of heroes.

When Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, that was not the dream intended for our country, and when the innocent people of the Oklahoma City bombing were so brutally victimized, that was not the dream America would one day prosper from either, but merely the blatant disrespect for human life and the rights of all who care for this country. Once again, I ask why? America is about freedom and responsibility. America is the dream of unity and everlasting respect. Why, then, are there demonstrations burning the very flag in which we should so gratefully salute, burning the very idea our forefathers worked, fought and died for. The authors of the Constitution did not attempt to establish a government and a symbol for all to honor so that one day their descendants could flagrantly burn and degrade their ac-

complishments. We must encourage those voices that they did not choose America, but America chose them, and now they must return her kind favor and participate in the Government which tries so very hard to guarantee their freedom, their responsibility, and their prosperity.

Never have I been so disappointed with my fellow citizens as when I see such horrendous disregard for human rights. Does not the Declaration of Independence directly state 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?"

Then why are people committing such acts of violence against one another, so unthinkable to our choice of freedom, hindering every possibility of justice among free, self-governed men? As a young citizen of this remarkable country, I feel it not only my privilege, but also my duty to protect and honor her at all times and to create within her the direction our fathers intended.

We must not blind ourselves to the needs of our nation, but we must stand up and fight to regain the pride and honesty we once knew. America is calling us, pleading for us to help her. As the future of this great nation, we must not only believe in the ideas of unity among the people, freedom and equality for all men, and the pleasure and possibilities of good government, but we must also act on them. Answering her calls will not be easy, but it will be necessary to fight the hatred that is growing stronger every day.

This nation calls to us from the graves of those long since gone, from the patriotic memorials of those we honor, and from the very idea we hold strong in our hearts, the idea of freedom, asking us kindly to remember those who gave so graciously to this country their lives and their freedom so that we might have ours. We must never forget how fortunate we are to be Americans and how wonderful it is to be free. America is calling out to you. Are you listening?

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