

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Our cherished values demand a concerted effort to protect them

The American Labor Day observance has long been viewed through a variety of lenses.

Some see it in its purest form as a holiday that commemorates the efforts of those who fought for workers' rights during the labor movement of the late 19th century, a hard-won campaign that eventually produced such benefits as the standard 40-hour work week, paid time off, sick leave, and safer work environments.

Others view it simply as the unofficial end of summer, a time when the "lazy, hazy, crazy days" give way to football and flaming fall colors that follow the start of school for students of all ages.

For those with a financial focus, the holiday serves as the runway to the all-important fourth quarter of the business year, a three-month segment that can make or break dreams of greatness and grandeur.

This year, it might be best to frame it as a golden opportunity to count our many cherished values, concepts that are embedded in our way of life and are often overlooked or taken for granted.

First and foremost, take time to treasure the relationships we enjoy with family and friends, recognizing the important roles they play in our daily existence. Friendships are vital to our mental and physical well-being, widening a safety net that can boost happiness,

reduce stress, and contribute to a sense of purpose and belonging.

Second, reflect on our fundamental freedom of choice, offering us the opportunity to live where we want in pursuit of the life of our dreams. Relatedly, we also are privileged to read and watch what we want, to worship what and where we please, and to vote without fear or favor.

Third, we should be especially grateful for our hallowed system of justice, which guarantees that no person will be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. This Fifth Amendment guarantee dovetails with the Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial before an impartial jury of our peers.

The Fourteenth Amendment, of course, is another constitutional pillar, guaranteeing equal protection of the laws. It has figured prominently in a series of landmark cases outlawing racial and gender discrimination.

In conceptual terms, equality is one of our most cherished ideals, providing equal opportunities and fair treatment for all Americans, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status.

In practice, unfortunately, it has proven to be an elusive concept due to deep-rooted prejudices that have dogged our country from its slave-holding beginnings. We can only hope that someday Thomas Jefferson's proposition



in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" will be more truth than fiction, thereby adding a layer of dignity and humanity to all Americans.

In that vein, we should treasure the fact that we live in a land of opportunity, a place where the time-honored "American Dream" is more than just a fanciful notion. Countless immigrants have proven it real, capitalizing on the freedom and opportunity to succeed in search of a better life, including the likes of South African-born Elon Musk, one of the richest men in the world. Success stories such as his help explain why immigrants own one-sixth of the small businesses in the U.S.

As members of the legal profession, we have a deep and abiding relationship with the rule of law, the cherished principles that ensure a just and orderly society in which all people, institutions, and business entities are held accountable for their actions. Collectively, those principles serve as a beacon of

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hope for those who believe in the value of our democratic institutions, which stand as vanguards for the cause of freedom and liberty around the globe.

In a symbolic sense, we all act as guardians of such sacred soil, the land upon which much suffering and sacrifice has occurred since our nation was born. Now, we serve as the foot soldiers in the ongoing battle for equal justice, fulfilling an obligation of citizenship where the will of the people remains forever steadfast.

Best regards,

Jack Buchanan, President