

# American Decline

## American Decline: Is it real?



*By MacPundit*

Growing up, most of us were cautioned to not discuss religion or politics while in polite company. This was and is good advice—generally speaking. But some general rules when applied too strictly can be disadvantageous, even to an entire society. For example, if our founders had not been aggressively vocal with their political opinions, it is almost certain that the United States of America would not exist.

Yet they angered a lot of people back then. Not everyone agreed with them and would rather they had kept their big mouths shut.

Ben Franklin's own son was loyal to the King so he opposed revolution. The split with his father was never resolved and to his last breath, Franklin's estrangement from his son hurt him deeply. Franklin paid a terribly high price for his beliefs.

By speaking out, our founders were deemed traitors by the British Crown. They became hunted men—wanted dead or alive. To

be clear, they not only spoke out, they fomented discontent among their fellow colonists, which led to a full-blown revolution. They formed an army and took up arms against the government of which they were citizens. They waged full-out war and ultimately created an entirely new nation. In so doing, they had a profound effect on the future of mankind by taking power from a monarch and giving it to the people. How impolite of them!

Some situations call for polite small talk but some situations call for robust debate. So how do we know when to be cautious with our words and when to speak out, even provocatively? When, as our founders did, should we risk condemnation by friends and family by telling what we believe to be important truths? Here are my personal rules:

1. First be sure of your facts. By this I mean that your opinions should be informed by the most reliable information you can find. Above all, don't base your opinions on hearsay or rhetoric from self-interested politicians or biased media, no matter what their ideology.
2. Remain as rational as possible in your deliberations in order to arrive at intellectually honest conclusions. Passion is good once you are sure of your beliefs, but it can cloud your judgment while forming your beliefs.
3. Finally, ask yourself if what you want to say is important enough to risk being condemned by people you respect or even the loss of friendships. Be convinced that your message can have a seriously positive effect on other's lives before you speak out.

Most of us want to be liked. It's a natural human trait. But living one's life for the sole purpose of being liked is actually quite selfish. It's all about you. True friends sometimes risk an angry response when they express an uncomfortable truth to someone they love. But they risk it

anyway because they care that much.

Our nation is in trouble—serious trouble. American decline is real. It is my belief that our very existence as the greatest nation in human history is in great jeopardy. I have followed the rules I set out above and have arrived at this conclusion after much study and personal deliberation. I have made my case based on the best available information.

News traveled slowly in eighteenth century America. But now it can reach all parts of the globe in seconds. We can have real-time conversations with people on the other side of the planet. Yet in many ways we are less informed on things that matter than ever before. And common sense? — I rarely hear the phrase spoken any more. It is truly a shame that while we now have the ability to inform and educate great masses of people throughout the world, our technology is too often used to misinform them or to use it for shallow commercial projects. Our mainstream news media are corrupt, biased, agenda-driven propagandists and our colleges and universities brainwash our children with worn out, disproved left-wing political ideologies. The result is an ignorant electorate who are vulnerable to any skilled rhetorician that comes along—hence the Obama phenomenon.

Again, American decline is real. So what is to be done? How can we save our nation? Well it won't be easy because far too many among us don't even have a clue that anything is wrong. But some of us do know what is wrong and we know how serious it is. So we are the ones who must begin to change things. We must become the Paul Reveres of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Just as our founders did hundreds of years ago, we need to speak out with conviction and determination. We must engage others in a new and robust American political conversation. We must alert the clueless among us to the peril we are in and urge them to become informed and engaged.

If we are to survive, if we are to reverse American decline,

we must talk more about politics, not less. It's simple: If we fail to do these things America will continue to decline. We will continue to become weaker until one day—a few generations from now—America will be at the mercy of more powerful nations and the world will be a far more dangerous place than it is today.

Paul Revere and others warned their fellow colonists that the British were coming. We must alert our fellow Americans that our enemies are already here, that they have already gained great power over us and that we are in imminent danger of losing the very things that made the United States of America the greatest, most admired nation in the history of mankind.

Who are these enemies of whom I speak? They are some of the very people we elected to lead and protect us. They are our politicians who for decades have whittled away at our freedoms and who have overtaxed us and recklessly spent our hard-earned money. Among so many other unconscionable acts, they have burdened us and countless future generations with a literally unimaginable massive debt of almost \$18 trillion. And it continues to grow larger by the second! President Obama added more debt than all our other presidents combined!

But it is worse, far worse than our loss of freedoms and massive debt. We are not only weaker economically, we are weaker militarily and ineffective diplomatically. The Middle East has become a significantly greater threat to world peace than it was six years ago. ISIS has taken control of a third of Syria and a third of Iraq and has established a caliphate—a new Islamic state. Our friends no longer respect or trust us and our enemies no longer fear us. Russia under Vladimir Putin mocks our president and takes land from sovereign nations while we and the world do nothing. And there is much more, which will be discussed here in future articles. Yes, American decline is real.

It is time for all Americans to learn the truth about our

great history; to learn why countless millions of people from all over the world have for over two hundred years come to our shores seeking freedom and opportunity—and why they still do. It is time for all Americans to become political just as the colonists were when they fought and died to create the nation we now take for granted. It is time to make politics popular and to realize that it is the most important topic of all—because it is. After all, when we the people don't get the politics right, the politicians take our power away. It is human nature and it has always been that way.

Recent surveys reveal that for the first time in our history a majority of Americans believe that future generations will not have the same freedoms and opportunities that we inherited from our parents and grandparents. Think of that for a moment. Do we really want to be the first generation of Americans that gave our children less than we received? I refuse to believe that. I believe that we are as strong and as caring as those who came before us. I believe that if the people are told the truth and if they know the danger they will rise up by the millions and do whatever is necessary to take back the power and restore the greatness of our nation.

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# Rescuing Citizenship And Civic Virtue

by Michelle Malkin

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As we celebrate our nation's 237th birthday, a crucial facet

of American life has all but vanished. We have forsaken, in a systematic and deliberate public manner, one of our most fundamental duties: fostering civic virtue in each and every one of our citizens.



What does it mean to be an American? Politicians in both parties keep pushing to create a new “path to citizenship” for millions of illegal aliens. But if sovereignty and self-preservation still matter in Washington, citizenship must be guarded ferociously against those who would exploit and devalue it at every electoral whim.

The pavers of the amnesty pathway think illusory requirements of paying piddling “fines” and back taxes will inculcate an adequate sense of responsibility and ownership in the American way. Other fair-weather friends of patriotism satisfy themselves with shallow holiday pop quizzes on American history to fulfill the “well-informed” part of the “well-informed citizenry” mandate of our Founding Fathers.

But Thomas Jefferson said it well: “No government can continue good but under the control of the people; and ... their minds are to be informed by education what is right and what wrong; to be encouraged in habits of virtue and to be deterred from those of vice... These are the inculcations necessary to render the people a sure basis for the structure and order of government.”

John Adams said it better: “Liberty can no more exist without virtue ... than the body can live and move without a soul.”

And Thomas Paine said it best: “When we are planning for posterity, we ought to remember that virtue is not

hereditary.”

Civic virtue cannot be purchased with token gestures or passed down in perfect form like a complete set of family china. A life of honor, honesty, integrity, self-improvement and self-discipline is something you strive ever to attain. Being American is a habit of mind, but also a habit of heart and soul. Abraham Lincoln spoke of the “electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together, that will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world.”

Calvin Coolidge, profiled in “Why Coolidge Matters,” a terrific new book by Charles C. Johnson, echoed the Founding Fathers’ emphasis on virtue, restraint and work ethic. “If people can’t support themselves,” he concluded, “we’ll have to give up self-government.”

The failure of public schools to impart even rudimentary knowledge of self-government principles, natural rights theory and the rule of law is compounded by the suicidal abandonment of civic education. As Stanford University education professor William Damon notes: “Our disregard of civic and moral virtue as an educational priority is having a tangible effect on the attitudes, understanding and behavior of large portions of the youth population in the United States today.”

Add militant identity politics, a cancerous welfare state, entitled dependence and tens of millions of unassimilated immigrants to the heap, and you have a toxic recipe for what Damon calls “societal decadence – literally, a ‘falling away,’ from the Latin *decadere*.” Civilizations that disdain virtue die.

Independence Day sparklers will light the skies overhead this July 4th, but George Washington’s “sacred fire of liberty” belongs in the breasts of Americans every day of the year.

How to rescue citizenship and civic virtue?

Let's start by sending a message to politicians in the nation's capital who imperil our sovereignty.

Citizenship – good citizenship – is not just a piece of government-issued paper. It is not merely a bureaucratic “status.” It's a lifelong practice and propagation of founding principles. A nation of low information is just half the problem. A nation of low character cannot long remain a free nation.

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