

(June 30, 2006) In Honor of the Fourth of July

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MR. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, two hundred and thirty years ago today, a small and rebellious colony did an extraordinary, but simple thing. It stood up to its powerful and mighty oppressors, exploded the shackles of their tyranny and declared itself an independent nation. I rise on this Fourth of July to remember the people who gave us our present freedom, and honor them for their ability to recognize that there will always be more to unite us than divide us.

It seems obvious today that our country would be united, but in 1776, the thirteen colonies had less in common with each other than they did with their arch enemy. It is a tribute to the phenomenal leadership of our Founding Fathers that they had the vision to see past these differences, and to forge a common bond, founded on the principles that "all men are created equal," and that no government has the authority to restrict the rights of the people to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

These shared values are the essence of our Union. If the signers of the Declaration of Independence were the architects of the nation, the foundations they built for us were made of the strongest stone. Even during our darkest hours, we look back on the document that launched the ship of this Republic into the rough seas of the nations of the world, and we take solace in its good words.

Mr. Speaker, the celebration of our independence is a celebration of the beliefs we hold together as a nation; it is a celebration of why we are a nation; and it is, above all, a reminder to us all that our country was founded in hope, and in the desire by the good people of the thirteen colonies to build a new nation where freedom would reign forever.