

Point of View

July 4, Birth(day) Of A Nation ASR

What priceless, vital treasure exists in America, guiding our lives? The answer is the Freedom we enjoy. It is the cornerstone upon which we built our country, and is what we honor each July 4.

Independence Day, one of the most significant holidays celebrated in America and its territories, is the anniversary of the day the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress — July 4, 1776.

According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, Independence Day was actually first observed in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776. The Declaration was read, bells were rung, bands played and the people celebrated. In 1941, Congress declared it a federal legal holiday.

In the early days, Independence Days were occasions for shows, games, sports, military music and fireworks. Today, many communities have similar celebrations with programs, parades, pageants, games, plays, athletic contests and picnics. Communities have traditionally stressed the patriotic nature of the holiday, as most recently seen by the 1976 Bicentennial and 1986 Statue of Liberty July 4 Celebrations.

World Book quotes John Adams when he said, "I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival . . . from one end of this continent to the other from this time forward and evermore."

Today, his words ring true as we take time out to celebrate the freedom and independence we hold so dear.

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To Be Equal By John E. Jacob

Workfare Wrong Welfare Road

When politicians confront an issue as volatile and as apparently intractable as the welfare system, there's a tendency to seek simple solutions. An example is the current obsession with workfare as a solution to welfare.

In its most basic form, "workfare" means forcing welfare recipients to work for their checks. The Administration backs the concept, and some states have implemented experimental programs that use work and work incentives to trim their welfare rolls.

Does it work? The federal government's General Accounting Office says no.

It studied 61 programs, including 38 workfare programs, and released a report in February that says such programs have modest effects on job prospects for participants and shouldn't be expected to cut welfare rolls.

Ironically, most of the fun-

ds used in government workfare programs came from the federal Work Incentive Program, which the Administration wants to drop.

The report charges the programs often spend very



John E. Jacob

little on each participant, and focus on low-cost job search help instead of the education and training aid needed in this job market.

The GAO found that most of the programs offered "paper" services like work-habit training and skills training, but a miniscule

number of recipients got such help. It also says many of the people who found jobs would have done so anyway, and that their jobs paid so little they remained poor and in need of government assistance.

Some work-oriented programs have considerably better results. Massachuset-

ts' program is voluntary, and its emphasis on education and training means it prepares applicants for decent jobs in the private sector.

shouldn't work. Studies show that single mothers, including long-term welfare recipients, are eager to work. Given the opportunity, they succeed.

But "opportunity" means providing child care facilities and transportation to get people to training centers. It means pre-employment ser-

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And opportunity also has to mean the availability of jobs. Our economy is simply not creating enough jobs to go around, and the less educated and least skilled are stuck in low-pay, high-turnover jobs that keep them poor.

The experience of community-based agencies in providing training and in finding employment opportunities for disadvantaged people also bears out the importance of concentrating resources on real-world job opportunities.

The differences between programs that work and those that don't is that the failures are oriented to pushing people off welfare, not in providing them with the skills needed for long-term independence.

There's no reason programs that provide the disadvantaged with education and skills training

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We The People

This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. In many ways, the creation of our Constitution was a more important event in our nation's history than the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

In the 11 years between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, America was little more than a collection of 13 bickering former colonies.

Under the Articles of Confederation, America could hardly be said to have a government at all. Congress and the courts were ineffective and the executive branch of government was nonexistent.

So in 1787, many of the same leaders who had so recently won our independence gathered in Philadelphia. Included in their number were such men as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison.

Their goal was to create a new form of government that would be strong enough to unify the states while absolutely guaranteeing individual rights and liberties.

That we are able to celebrate the bicentennial of that Constitution is testimony to their genius. That basic document still protects our right to worship as we please, to speak freely on all issues and to freely communicate with one another through newspapers and magazines without fear of unwarranted government interference or censorship.

That our founding fathers were able to produce a document that would stand the test of time is a tribute to their great political skills as well as their wisdom. Those who went to Philadelphia representing their states began with major differences. Each had a vision of how America should be governed. Hamilton had an aristocrat's fear of "the mass of the people." He was countered by such advocates of democracy as Virginia's Madison and George Mason.

That our Constitution began as a result of compromise, of give and take between widely differing viewpoints, may be one of the secrets of its greatness. It is our legacy of seeking peaceful solutions for difficult problems and allowing opposing opinions to be openly and freely debated. ■

This is one of a series of columns celebrating the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

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Words of Marcus Garvey By Kofi Tyus

"We must liberate ourselves."