

Newport Harbor Republican Women's Club January 27, 2022
John Ferris – Orange County Chapter SAR

Hello.

Thank you for having me speak to you today. I am very happy and honored to be addressing you this afternoon.

I am from the Orange County Chapter of the California Society Sons of the American Revolution. I serve as Commander in their Color Guard. Each member of the Sons of the American Revolution, like the DAR, has a proven lineage from a patriot that fought to establish the country, which we enjoy today. I am also the Co-Chair of the State Society's America 250 Committee.

You see me dressed up in a suit slightly different from what you would normally see. I am in my regimentals. This is the continental uniform of our patriots that fought for independence from England to create what would become the United States of America. As I speak to you today, I would like you to think of me as a visitor from 250 years ago coming to ask for your help in the continuing struggle of liberty and freedom.

Today, I am asking for your support of a piece of legislation that was recently introduced by the Honorable Janet Nguyen known as AB-1600. This bill would establish the California Commission on the United States Semiquincentennial, sometimes referred to as America 250, to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States of America. The bill would require the commission to plan and coordinate commemorations and observances of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration and the American Revolution. Most of you remember the 200th in 1976. This time we want to do it even better!

All 50 states will end up having a Semiquincentennial in due course. Many have already been set up on the East Coast. Yet, only one or two refer to the DAR and SAR. These two organizations, as I said before, are comprised of men and women whose ancestors fought for this country. I believe many of you are from the DAR. It seems wrong to have a commission celebrating the birth of our nation without having the descendants of those who fought for that birth having a seat at the table. This bill requires that the SAR and DAR have seats on the California commission.

Today when this country seems to be going in so many directions, I think it is time to remember who we were so we can be better at who we are. The period of the revolution for most of our history has provided a strong backbone of identity. A backbone fleshed with courage and fortitude. The understanding of sacrifice for the common good. The reverence to a providential God. These are the values of the men and women who fought 250 years ago so you and I could be here today. That is the spirit that should be sitting on our own California Commission.

So, I am asking all of you to contact your representatives and especially Janet Nguyen, to let them know you support this bill. That you believe in our revolutionary history and want to see it

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preserved. That this is an instructive history which our children should learn so they will better understand and appreciate, as do you all, the importance of civic engagement.

Our patriots gave their time, talent and treasure and sometimes their life to create this wonderful country. Today, our task is not to create a new country, but the task may be just as hard. This afternoon I am asking for your help to preserve our country. Not with musket and sword, but with pen and magnetic ink. Writing to your representatives letting them know that AB1600 means something to you. That we, as Americans, don't want to forget those who fought and died so we can be Americans.

On October 27, 1964 at the Republican National Convention, Ronald Reagan gave what is now known as his Freedom Speech. Many of you have already heard it. While I did not hear it when it was originally said, I have remembered it since I first heard it many years ago:

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

Known as The Great Communicator, Reagan's words for me, put a fine point on my responsibility as an American.

Finally, I wanted to share with you a program in the SAR known as America 250 SAR. It is a program focusing on the events of that period of history from the close of the French/Indian War in 1763 to the Signing of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1783. 20 years of struggle, 20 years of birthing. It wasn't an easy birth! The SAR through this program wants us as Americans to remember it was not the simple signing of a document on July 4th, 1776 that created this nation. It was those 20 tumultuous years, with a lot of sacrifice and struggle that made it happen.

Something I started in our Orange County Chapter was the America 250 Minute. This is when, at each meeting, there will be 5 minutes devoted to this history that is shared with the members. Our revolutionary history is very rich with personal stories of bravery, sacrifice, struggle and eventually victory. Stories that continue to inspire you and me. The America 250 Minute is looked forward to in several chapters in the state. The idea has even received attention from the National Society and is being rolled out in other state societies. I would encourage you, as well, to think about adopting something like an America 250 Minute for your own organization. It's only a few minutes, but it helps to ground us on where we came from so we may have a clearer vision of where we need to go. I would be happy to help you get it started if you so desired.

You have been a very gracious to host me. Thank you for listening and please, please don't forget to contact your representatives to tell them you support this bill.

Thank you.