

Cassandra Knauss

12th Grade

Martin High School

Liberty Today

When I hear the word “liberty” I think of America. I think of all the things Americans have the privilege to do, like voting or driving a car or being able to take a walk with a sense of safety—things that people in other countries might not be able to do. I think of how easy it is for Americans to get a job and to have a family within the safety of the country—things that may not be as easy in other countries. America is the “land of opportunities,” and although that is something I should find a sense of satisfaction in being apart of, I don't. I don't think of my freedom with pride, but with anguish; because to me, liberty isn't just about freedom for America, but freedom for all.

I've spent my entire life learning about how powerful and marvelous America is, and it saddens me. Power doesn't matter to me—equality does. I don't care if America is the greatest country in the world—what about the other countries? What about all the people that don't have the freedoms Americans do? Do those countries even know what liberty is like? I may be alone in my thoughts, but I think every single life on this earth matters. Whether you are American, Muslim, Hispanic, African American, Indian, Chinese—whatever: your life matters. It shouldn't be America versus every other country in the world, or Americans against all other races. We are all human.

I want liberty for all. To me, liberty consists of being able to get a job without being judged upon your race or gender. The ability to speak your mind without facing criticism. The chance to travel the world regardless of where you came from. The opportunity for your child to go to school, or even college. The chance to live a normal life without the fear of terrorism. The chance to search the internet without finding racist jokes or comments. The possibility to do anything and everything you put your mind to. The chance to chase your dreams regardless of money. The opportunity to love whoever you choose. *The chance to live rather than survive.*

The meaning of liberty is finding total and utter peace within your freedoms. I want to live in a world that bears empathy and kindness—a world that unites to respect our differences. I want to live in a world that welcomes the unknown rather than fearing it. I want to live in a country that values love rather than war. I want to live in a world where everyone and everything is destined for greatness rather than expected to fail because of the odds. I want to live in a world where there are no impossibilities. Mostly, I want to live in a world where there is liberty for all, not just for America, because it doesn't matter where we come from or what the color of our skin looks like—our hearts beat as one. We are all human, so we should all get the liberty we deserve—regardless of if we are American or not.