

We Democrats Need to Show Our Love for America

Ceding patriotism to the GOP does a disservice to our party, and more important, to our nation.

By Democrat Tom Suozzi, represents New York's Third Congressional District. July 1, 2026



I love America. Unfortunately, as we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, too many Americans associate those three words only with Republicans. Democrats need to change that.

Many in my party are unhappy with the nation's current trajectory. Under President Trump, we've fallen short on income inequality. We've seen masked

agents go head-to-head with U.S. citizens. Our elections and voting rights have been attacked, while misinformation proliferates online amid bigotry, extremism and political violence.

Despite all this, we should remain fiercely proud of the American system. It has enabled the quest for "a more perfect union," making possible the abolition of slavery, the rights of women and black Americans to vote, the protection of civil rights, the confrontation of religious, ethnic and racial bigotry and so much more.

Patriotism doesn't ask us to whitewash the country's shortcomings. It requires us to confront them honestly while recognizing that our Constitution, our democratic institutions and generations of courageous citizens have given us the ability to correct our mistakes.

Democrats have long believed that America is great not because it is perfect, but because it has the capacity to become better. We must reclaim the language of patriotism, because our history teaches us the most American thing any of us can do is help our great nation live up to the ideals charted by our Founders 250 years ago: liberty, equality, democracy and the rule of law.

Our authoritarian adversaries suppress dissent and erase uncomfortable truths. America has repeatedly expanded liberty, broadened opportunity, and moved closer to fulfilling the promise that all people are created equal.

That's why generations of Democrats have stood proudly at the helm of some of the most consequential struggles to shape American life. Democrats supported the rise of organized labor. Democrats gave us the 40-hour workweek and worker protections. Democrats created Social Security and Medicare. Democrats championed civil rights. Democrats pushed for major environmental protections. And it is Democrats who must now lead us patriotically into the future.

We must rebuild the American middle class. But we can't do this by abandoning capitalism. Only by improving capitalism can we reward hard work and expand opportunity for every American who seeks it.

Capitalism has helped make America the most innovative and prosperous nation in the world. It has lifted living standards, created opportunity and helped build the strongest middle class in history. It has powered breakthroughs from the lightbulb to the microchip and fueled the ingenuity that defines our nation.

But capitalism works only when it is shaped by fair rules, open competition and a basic sense of responsibility. The answer to inequality isn't to tear capitalism down, but to make it work better for the men and women who go to work every day and want to live the American Dream of homeownership, educated children, affordable health insurance and a safe retirement.

Patriotism means recognizing that America has been a force for good. The American Revolution wasn't only a victory for the 13 colonies. It fueled struggles for independence, democracy and self-determination from Europe to Latin America. Across centuries, America's example and leadership have also shaped Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, Australia, Canada, and many other places.

Two and a half centuries later, America is still a beacon. We should take pride in the generations of Americans who fought tyranny, defeated Nazism and fascism, defended democracy, welcomed millions and answered the call to help nations facing war, disaster and oppression. Our country has made mistakes abroad, but few nations have done more to advance human freedom and democratic values.

None of this means Democrats must agree with every policy or action of every administration. Patriotism doesn't demand blind loyalty. It demands faith that our country is worth improving and confidence that our ideals are worth defending.

That same spirit should guide our agenda at home. Making America more affordable for working families, lowering the cost of healthcare and childcare, protecting our seniors and strengthening public schools are all part of the same American project.

So are investing in infrastructure, science and clean energy; supporting workers and small businesses; securing our borders while honoring our immigrant heritage; defending voting rights and equal justice; and upholding individual liberty and the rule of law.

Together, these goals reflect a simple patriotic belief: America works best when communities are safe, opportunity is broad and every citizen has a voice in the nation's future.

We should reject both the politics of resentment on the right and ideological purity on the left. Americans are looking for practical solutions, not endless culture wars or litmus tests.

The choice Democrats face is clear. We can allow patriotism to become a partisan label, or we can reclaim a tradition that rightly belongs to every American.