

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Message on the 160th Anniversary of the Ratification of the 13th Amendment

December 6, 2025

On this day 160 years ago, the United States of America ratified the 13th Amendment of the Constitution, immortalizing a self-evident principle that stirred the hearts of patriots and forever changed the course of history: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

Today our Nation proudly recognizes the ratification of the 13th Amendment as a morally defining moment in our great American story, and we recommit to upholding our country's long-cherished principles of freedom, equal justice under the law, and the God-given dignity of the human person.

In his legendary Gettysburg Address, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed that our Nation was "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Guided by this principle, on January 1, 1863, he formally issued the Emancipation Proclamation to declare freedom for enslaved people. Yet, the abolitionist cause was not fully complete without a constitutional solution.

Tragically, President Lincoln's devotion to our founding principles cost him his life 8 months before the amendment to formally abolish slavery was ratified by three-fourths of the States, and he never lived to see the end of slavery on our shores. Today, his immortal memory continues to live on in our hearts, and his timeless example of justice, unity, and statesmanship continues to inspire citizens all across our country. To further President Lincoln's vision, my administration is working tirelessly to ensure that America will always be guided by the principles he cherished so deeply and that we will remain the freest, safest, and most prosperous nation in the history of the world.

As we prepare to celebrate 250 years of glorious American independence, we honor the heroes who paved the path for the end of slavery on our land, and we applaud the brave men and women of the abolitionist movement who dedicated their lives to upholding the American promise. Above all, we acknowledge that freedom's triumph over tyranny on December 6, 1865, stands as an enduring reminder that America was, is, and will forever be a great Nation.

Categories: Letters and Messages : 13th amendment, 160th anniversary of ratification, message.

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