

Message on the Birthday of President Abraham Lincoln, 2026

February 12, 2026

Today our Nation celebrates the 217th birthday of President Abraham Lincoln, one of the most legendary leaders in American history whose fearless leadership in the Civil War saved our Nation from collapse and reunited a shattered Union under one flag.

Born on February 12, 1809, in a humble one-room log cabin on the Kentucky frontier, Abraham Lincoln's life represents the incredible potential that is uniquely fostered in America. Largely self-taught, he educated himself by reading borrowed books by candlelight after long days of labor on his family's farm. From those unlikely beginnings emerged a mind of remarkable clarity and depth that would later define his leadership. Through midwestern grit and determination, Lincoln became an accomplished attorney, a State representative, a Member of Congress, and a brilliant orator, writer, and debater. He was undoubtedly one of the most intelligent men of his age.

Yet with every public triumph came personal tragedy, and his life reflected the complex divisions plaguing the country in the early 19th century. His marriage to Mary Todd brought together a slave-owning family with the man who would eventually bring slavery to an end. While his marriage flourished, the loss of three of their four beloved children left Lincoln in a dark melancholy for the rest of his life. He and his wife bore on their face the scars of their own grief and, eventually, the grief of our entire embattled Nation.

As slavery continued to tear the Republic apart in the 1850s, Lincoln's opposition to the expansion of slavery quickly spread across the land. He entered the race for the United States Senate, where his legendary debates against pro-slavery Democrat Stephen Douglas made him a nationally known figure. In 1860, the newly founded Republican Party chose him as its standard bearer, and the American people entrusted him with the Presidency of the United States.

Shortly following Lincoln's election as our 16th President, Southern States began to secede from the Union. During the course of 4 grueling years, President Lincoln led the country through its darkest days and fought tirelessly to preserve our Republic during great trial. He commanded vast armies against the forces of the Confederacy at great cost to human life, issued the Emancipation Proclamation that freed millions from the chains of bondage, and championed the Thirteenth Amendment to expel the scourge of slavery from American soil forever.

Reelected in triumph in 1864 amid the devastation of civil war, President Lincoln turned to the solemn work of binding up our Nation's wounds. Armed with resolute courage, he sought to restore the rule of law, heal the divisions of civil strife, and reclaim the enduring American principles of liberty, freedom, and prosperity, ideals that had been tested to their breaking point by years of bloodshed and bitter division. In his crusade to restore the Union and renew its founding promises, he spread a message of reconciliation, working to unite a divided Nation around its most deeply held values. Tragically, his commitment to justice and peace ultimately cost him his life: Just over a month into his second term, at the age of 56, he was killed by an assassin's bullet on April 14, 1865.

Today, more than a century and a half after President Lincoln's death, my administration is honoring his legacy by defending the Constitution, enforcing law and order, advancing justice, and ensuring that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the Earth. We are safeguarding American workers from unfair foreign competition with strong tariffs, a principle championed by President Lincoln, who understood that strategic tariffs

could strengthen industry and generate great wealth. We are standing firmly against chaos and division, rebuilding our military to its full strength, and vigorously protecting free speech, religious liberty, and the unique American heritage that has defined us across generations, values that President Lincoln defended throughout his life, even amid the peril of civil war.

As our Republic celebrates its 250th year of independence, we dedicate ourselves to the unfinished work President Lincoln entrusted to the American people. This historic milestone demands that we once again take up his torch, summon his courage, invoke his vision, and advance the enduring truths of our founding principles. Guided by President Lincoln's faith in the American people and grounded in the ideals of liberty, unity, and self-government, we stand ready to chart a new and bold course toward the next 250 years of American freedom, strength, and prosperity.

Categories: Letters and Messages : President Abraham Lincoln, message on birthday.

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