

March 1st, 2026

Dear Lt. Governor Wasinger,

To be proud of something means understanding it fully; its strengths, its struggles, and the responsibility that comes with it. I am proud to be an American not because this country is perfect, but because it inspires me to believe in possibility. At its core, America represents freedom of choice: the freedom to decide who we want to be, what we want to believe, and how we want to live our lives. That freedom is not just written into laws or documents; it's something I see and experience every day. It reminds me that no matter my background, my goals, or the challenges I face, I have the ability to work toward a future that I choose.

One of the most powerful ideas America stands for is the American Dream. It's not a promise of an easy life, but a promise of opportunity, the belief that through hard work, determination, and perseverance, anyone can strive for a better life. While America has its faults, it continues to stand as a symbol of hope. The freedom to choose our education, careers, and even where we live allows each person to shape their own path. That opportunity inspires me because it places responsibility in my hands. Success is not guaranteed, but the chance to pursue it is, and that chance motivates me to work harder every day.

Freedom of speech plays a major role in why I am proud to be an American. The First Amendment guarantees our right to express our beliefs, share our ideas, and associate with others who share our values. In America, disagreement is not silenced, it is protected. We are allowed to speak up, challenge ideas, and engage in conversations that encourage growth. We can form clubs, organizations, and communities around causes and passions that matter to us. In many

parts of the world, people are punished for speaking their minds. Knowing that my voice matters, and that I am free to use it, is something I will never take for granted.

Having a voice also means learning how to listen. America is built on many different opinions, cultures, religions, and traditions. Diversity is not a weakness, it is one of our greatest strengths. I have been fortunate to interact with people from many different backgrounds and perspectives, and those experiences have shaped how I see the world. They have taught me that progress happens when people with different stories come together and choose understanding over division. Respecting others' rights is just as important as exercising my own. America's diversity is reflected not only in its people, but also in its landscapes. From wide open farmland to crowded cities, from mountains to coastlines, every region contributes something unique to the nation as a whole. Together, these differences form one country. This inspires me because it proves that unity does not require sameness. Differences can exist side by side, working toward a shared purpose, and creating something stronger than any single part.

What inspires me most about America is the belief that one person can make a difference. History shows that change often begins with individuals who are willing to speak up, work hard, and lead by example. Whether through leadership, service, or everyday actions, Americans have the ability to improve their communities. This belief pushes me to be accountable for my choices and to look for ways to positively impact others. It reminds me that my actions matter, no matter how small they may seem.

I am proud to be an American because this country challenges me to rise higher. It gives me freedom, but it also gives me responsibility. The freedom to choose my path means I must use that opportunity wisely. The freedom to speak means I must use my voice with integrity. America inspires me to believe in myself, to respect others, and to work toward a future built on

effort, unity, and hope. One day, I hope to embody the values that make this country meaningful; determination, freedom, and service. If I can rise above my own challenges and inspire even one person the way America inspires me, then I will know I have truly honored what it means to be an American.

Proud American,

Gabi