

A Better American Future

“Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. We fought for these ideals and shouldn’t settle for less,” raps Daveed Diggs in the Broadway musical *Hamilton* by Lin Manuel Miranda. The play showcases how the founding fathers overcame British rule 250 years ago, and created a government that functions on humanitarian principles. As the United States has advanced into a global power, our structural foundation has weakened, beams snapping, bricks crumbling, and yet we continue to build higher without repairing the fading infrastructure. The next 250 years are an opportune time for the nation to shift its focus; the three main challenges consist of repairing the values it was built upon, protecting the Earth’s welfare, and the urgent need to regulate AI. I believe *I* can help shift the focus back towards these values by piecing back together our unsteady tower. By creating initiatives to save the environment, reducing discord AI use, and protecting humanity as a whole, the United States’ next 250 years will *certainly* triumph its last.

If our world continues to remain stagnant through the next 250 years, the Earth will be destroyed. The planet is already experiencing extreme weather, extinction of more species, and diseases inflicted on the world’s population, and we have no way of predicting the severity of future consequences. As the United States begins its next milestone, the first measures taken are initiatives to save the planet. Subsequently, our nation is a global power, and should be the country to lead in sustainability and renewables. That, however, starts with us citizens. As part of the incoming generation, I want to create environmental awareness in my community. Little by little, gaining more understanding is crucial to begin healing the Earth. By shifting the US’s

focus toward environmental sustainability, other countries redouble their efforts, thus ensuring a safer world, and therefore future.

Our world has never ceased to advance, always in a perpetual state of growth for better or worse. As of now, our world is experiencing a rapid increase in Artificial Intelligence led by the US. Some say this growth is unmonitored, and I agree. This is therefore the second issue that requires addressing in the incoming centuries. AI is assimilating into everyday lives, used for studies, generating ideas, and navigation techniques. Contrasting to people's optimistic views, studies from MIT and Harvard show that AI overuse can lower one's ability to be creative and think independently. Moreover, AI data centers have a major climate footprint, using copious amounts of water resources. The consequences to brain health and the environment have great risks, and the US *needs* to regulate AI use so future generations do not become increasingly dependent on machines. On a smaller scale, I can minimize my AI use and encourage others to do so as well. Our nation can therefore *maximize* its capability, advancing through the next 250 years by refraining AI use *now*.

The foundation of American society was built on stilts of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence, all supporting humanitarian values when liberated from Britain. These ideologies of promoting people's welfare have been challenged, as progress takes hold. Examples include child labor during the Industrial Revolution, where children were subjected to tumultuous conditions because of factory industries' longing for increased profits at the expense of their employees. Although laws were enforced to prevent these torturous incidents, there are similar patterns in the US today. Minorities in low income neighborhoods endure health issues from landfills near their communities, consisting of waste *we* produce. The United States has become a progress focused society, our tower still crumbling, and we've turned

away as it crushes casualties. It is important to advance, but the nation cannot dismiss its effects on its population. Additionally, my efforts in sustainability and monitoring my AI use can show others the values of the US at its founding that need reviving. The change I create may be small, but eventually the effect will show others how they can lead themselves with consideration. Therefore, as the United States starts its path into the next 250 years, the journey should continue with mindfulness, preventing the nation from bulldozing through people as innocent victims of progress.

All in all, as the United States celebrates their landmark of 250 years, I want to ensure that changes within our nation are made to better our society *and* the world. Necessities such as environmental protection, safe AI use, and safeguarding our nation's original values, are vital tasks to focus on through the next years, conveying responsibility to next generations. Reminding people about the values the US was founded upon will start a change that the country needs to better the world, and the people in it. As I help start this change, and when our people realize the initiative needed, I am certain they will sprint forward, combining into one tumultuous crowd with bricks, wooden panes, and screws in their hands, piecing back together the tower of our even *greater* nation.