



June 18, 2026

RE: Letter to America 250: A Celebration of Hope

Dear America:

This summer, amid the everyday busyness of our lives, we will pause to celebrate 250 years of the United States of America. For certain, a deliberate pause is worth it considering that our nation, for all its strength and prosperity today, very nearly did not survive its earliest years. Yet we are defined by courage, perseverance, and an enduring belief in the promise that tomorrow will be better than today. This milestone is not just a commemoration of history; it is a celebration of hope.

If we are honest, we know that from the earliest days, people have arrived on these shores under vastly different circumstances. Many came in search of opportunity, some in pursuit of freedom, and others through trials not of their choosing. While the stories may be different, the chapters of our history reflect a belief that tomorrow can be greater than today. That belief has fueled generations to rise above hardship, to innovate and create as well to build, and to lead.

We cherish freedoms like that of religion, thought, enterprise, expression, and opportunity. These freedoms serve as a springboard for progress. They have enabled individuals, families, and communities to transform challenges into steppingstones. In every corner of our nation many stories exist of people who began with little but achieved extraordinary success because they never lost sight of hope. They believed not only in their own potential, but in the promise that if they worked hard enough, they would fulfill their dreams.

Many of our most respected leaders embody this spirit. Their journeys remind us that success is rarely immediate or easy. It was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that reminded us, "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." Our country's forebears faced uncertainty, navigated obstacles, and embraced opportunity and did so not because conditions were perfect, but because they believed in what was possible.

Today, as we stand at this 250-year milestone, we recognize that challenges remain. However, history has shown us that even in times of difficulty, hope never disappoints, it endures and propels us forward. The American story is still being written by those who dare to dream, believe in the strength of community, and remain committed to shaping a brighter future.



We live in imperfect times, with challenges that are uniquely our own, but despite the uncertainty of today, the future remains rich with potential. As we celebrate this historic anniversary, it is my hope that as Americans we will have a renewed commitment to supporting and empowering one another and simply believing in the human spirit. Hope is not a feeling; it is a belief that shapes outcomes. We remain one nation, bound not by perfection but by purpose, and that, more than anything, is worth celebrating.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonardo McClarty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "L" and a long, sweeping tail on the "y".

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President/CEO, Fayette Chamber of Commerce