

The work of a more perfect union: YCEA CEO's thoughts on the 250th



Two hundred fifty years ago, an improbable experiment in self-governance began.

As America marks that milestone, I find myself reflecting on what this country, and this community, have meant to me.

Nearly three decades ago, I moved to York and found far more than a place to live. I found a home. I found opportunity. I found generosity. I found purpose.

I have had the privilege of serving this community in many ways, as Economic & Community Development Director for the City of York, as a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and now as President & CEO of the York County Economic Alliance.

Through each chapter, the mission has remained the same: helping our residents, businesses, organizations, communities, and Commonwealth reach their fullest potential while advancing broad, shared prosperity.

Along the way, I've worked with people from every walk of life, families whose roots here span generations, indigenous communities, immigrants pursuing citizenship, individuals seeking second chances, highly accomplished leaders, hardworking teachers and nurses, and families simply striving for greater opportunity and a better future for their children.

That, to me, is America.

Perhaps that is why this reflection feels especially meaningful here in York. Our community played a quiet but important role in the American story. During the Revolutionary War, when uncertainty and division defined the moment, York became the temporary capital of a young nation. The work of democracy continued here. Leadership endured here. Progress moved forward here. There is something powerful about that reminder: even in uncertain times, America has always found a way to keep moving forward.

My American dream has never been about status or titles. It has always been about service, impact, and the opportunity to contribute to something bigger than myself.

Our nation has never been perfect, and it never will be. We are tested. We face division. We stumble. But the enduring promise of America is not perfection, it is progress. It is the constant pursuit of becoming better, stronger, fairer, and more united.

If we can look beyond the hats, the rhetoric, the lawn signs, and the constant obsession with who wins and who loses, and instead focus on good leadership, better outcomes, and the

greater good, we might just lower the temperature and move the conversation in a healthier direction.

Two hundred fifty years is a remarkable milestone. And yet, in the long arc of history, America is young.

Think about what we have built in such a short time. Think about what is still possible.

Even in difficult times, and even when it may not always feel that way, we remain incredibly fortunate. We have much to be grateful for, and even more worth fighting to preserve and improve.

It is not always easy to give grace to those with different viewpoints. But perhaps in 2026, we can recommit ourselves to listening more, leading with empathy, and walking a mile in another's shoes before rushing to judgment.

As far as we know, we get one spin on this blue marble. Let's make it count. Let's build stronger communities, create opportunities, serve one another, and leave this country better than we found it.

Here in York, where the Articles of Confederation were adopted, there is an added reminder that America's strength has always rested in advancing our "mutual and general welfare."

As we move into America's 251st year, do we still stand by that sentiment?

While the Articles ultimately proved imperfect, the principle behind them endures. And perhaps that is fitting. Just like our country, we are all imperfect. But we can strive to improve. We can always do better. After all, it does get better for everyone, when it gets better for everyone.

As Thomas Jefferson wrote, "The wise know their weakness too well to assume infallibility; and he who knows most, knows best how little he knows."

May we carry humility, perspective, and hope into America's next chapter.

Happy 250th, America.

Kevin J. Schreiber

President & CEO of the York County Economic Alliance.