

**Carly Tefft's Sandwich Republican Town Committee Scholarship Essay:  
Under what circumstances would you limit personal freedoms for more security?**

"O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

These words by Francis Scott Key continue to inspire and motivate every citizen to be proud, faithful, and protect the United States of America. Since that battle at Fort McHenry on September 14th, 1814, the lyrics of our National Anthem have brought meaning and purpose to this country. Prosperity, freedom, and security are the cornerstones of our nation, but security and freedom have often been in conflict. Freedom should always be paramount, but we need to secure and preserve that freedom. That requires occasional restrictions, especially during times of war or the threat of attack.

The famous phrase 'we learn from history' is not always true. Throughout America's history, there have been times where we have needed to limit freedom in order to keep our country safe...but there are many examples of the government going too far. After the Civil War, Jim Crow laws were enforced throughout the South...ostensibly to make areas "safer", but in reality designed to restrict the freedom of black Americans. During World War II, the federal government forced many Japanese-Americans into West Coast internment camps. The years after the war saw the rise of the infamous McCarthy Era in which Hollywood blacklisted actors, writers and producers suspected of being sympathetic to Communism. These instances from our history show how some restrictions on freedom--however well-meant they may have been-- went too far and actually harmed citizens, which should never be the goal.

The decade following the attacks of September 11, 2001 again forced us to face the freedom-vs-security issue. Americans have seen some of our personal freedoms breached...but it was done in a carefully planned, controlled and organized manner. Airport security was most obviously affected, as anyone who's experienced intensive bag searches, metal detectors, body scanners and/or pat downs can tell you. Some Americans say these extra security measures are too intrusive and restrictive; but in my opinion, if we loosen our grip even a little, terrorists will seize the opportunity to attack. We must not let our guard down; we cannot afford another attack like September 11th to occur. Although some of our rights and freedoms are infringed upon, we gain a measure of safety from a clear threat. Laws are by definition restrictions of freedom, but a country needs laws to function properly, or else it would descend into anarchy.

Another security issue arising from 9/11 is the treatment of suspected terrorists. President George W. Bush established the military tribunal system, which gives suspects fewer rights than the civilian system used for American citizens. The tribunals came under much criticism from civil libertarians. President Barack Obama proposed ending the tribunal system because he thought it didn't conform to American ideals. Most notably he supported putting Khalid Sheik Mohammed, who planned the 9/11 attacks, on a civilian trial in New York City...within a few blocks of Ground Zero. This could have created pandemonium and potentially placed thousands of innocent New Yorkers' lives at risk. Taking this into consideration, the President eventually--and wisely--decided to keep KSM in the military tribunal system as a matter of national security. This is exactly the type of restriction on freedom that I, and most Americans, support.

In conclusion, national security is a matter the United States needs to always take very seriously, even if it means occasionally limiting personal freedoms. The key is finding the proper balance of freedom and security, which in turn creates the trust necessary for the public to accept reasonable restrictions on freedoms. The government needs to respect our freedoms without taking advantage of them. But no matter what, we must never forget the words of our Declaration: "...all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed... "