

## Reflections...

By [Joseph B. Altonji](#) on July 2, 2014

As we here in the US celebrate our nation's Independence Day, I want to step away from my recent series of posts focused on strategic execution (I'll come back to that next time) to share a few thoughts and reflections on our country and the role our industry plays.

- Our country was built on a set of rights and a legal foundation centered in our Constitution. We should never forget and always be thankful for the brave men and women who have died and suffered greatly to protect our country. We can also be proud of the critical role the legal profession has played in preserving and protecting those rights and with them our country. They should not be taken for granted.
- In declaring our independence, the founders boldly proclaimed *"that 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."* Our results will vary according to our abilities and efforts, but we in this country have the right to strive for happiness. But of course, this right could be denied if not for the efforts of the legal profession over the years, often pro bono on the part of those who can't fend for themselves. Our industry has been critical to the protection of the fundamental rights we celebrate this week.
- Despite our challenges, our economy remains the world's largest and is capable of creating great value. This would not be possible without clear property rights and an impartial system for adjudicating disputes. Rules matter, as do contracts. Our profession exists, in significant part, to assure that this remains true. Absent that, our living standards would be far lower.

Over the years, lawyers have been the brunt of many jokes, and obviously not always revered. This may sometimes be deserved, but we should not ignore and should never forget that protecting the law, and the constitutional foundations of our country, is critical to preserving the freedoms our forefathers fought so hard to gain and to keep. While not alone, lawyers have often been leaders in this critically important fight – and most lawyers, while sometimes on different sides of an issue, share a dedication to the same core principles of preserving those rights. So this week as we celebrate Independence Day, take a moment to reflect on the contributions your firm and profession make to the preservation of our key rights and freedoms, and celebrate those who have lead the charge.

We wish you all a happy and healthy July 4<sup>th</sup>!