



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on July 4, 2026

As America Marks Its 250th Anniversary, Debates Rage Over National Identity

This July 4th, the United States commemorates the [semiquincentennial](#) — 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. [America 250](#) and [Freedom 250](#) celebrate the earliest days of our nation. Yet a modern debate rages: What does it mean to be American?

The recent Supreme Court decision in [Trump v. Barbara](#) defines citizenship loosely. In a [6-3 ruling](#), the justices rejected President Trump's [executive order](#) seeking to limit birthright citizenship. The court chose to ignore the purpose of the 14th Amendment (to give legal status to freed ex-slaves) and to brush aside Senator Jacob Howard (R-Mich.), the author of the amendment, who [said](#) that it wasn't to be applied to the children of foreigners. "This will not, of course, include persons born in the United States who are foreigners, aliens, who belong to the families of ambassadors or foreign ministers accredited to the Government of the United States."

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SCOTUS has instead entrenched a shift from America as a historic nation, rooted in blood, soil, shared heritage, language, and culture, to an economic zone based on competing ideas. Citizenship becomes detached from a distinct people and tied instead to mere presence on the soil (with or without actual ideological subscription). It incentivizes birth tourism, strains resources, and dilutes the cultural cohesion essential for self-government. Emphasizing a pluralistic society erases a shared heritage and fractures our Founder's vision.

British historian Sir John Glubb's 1976 [essay](#) "The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival" offers a sobering historical parallel. Glubb examined empires across 3,000 years and identified a recurring ~250-year cycle of rise and decline, spanning roughly 10 generations: pioneers/outburst, conquest, commerce, affluence, intellect, and decadence. Decadence features defensiveness, pessimism, materialism, frivolity, and heavy influx of foreigners who do not fully assimilate.

America reaches this 250-year mark today. Glubb's pattern warns that internal moral and cultural erosion, often masked by wealth and intellectualism, precedes collapse more certainly than even external conquest. Whether America succumbs or renews itself depends on recommitting to the limited-government republic, cultural continuity, and sovereignty the Founders envisioned. As fireworks light the skies, we must ask if this banner anniversary will reaffirm a nation of a particular people with a definable heritage, or accelerate its transformation into borderless chaos. The fidelity of citizens to



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constitutional principles will decide.



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