



Students sit outside Swan Lake. Many huskies have enjoyed relaxing in the late summer weather. PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

NOW MORE THAN EVER, LOVE YOUR COUNTRY

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In the early days of June, when the newfound freedoms of summer are still fresh and exciting and the dogdays of July seem, still, so far away, I grab a ladder from the garage and unfurl my American flag. She's a symbol of pride for me but I don't think my neighbors quite agree with the sentiment. In fact, I am part of a minority 43% of Americans that still hang a flag outside their house. In the contemporary era where the government is more distant from the collective than ever and it feels anything but representative, calling yourself a patriot is seemingly an unjustifiable task. Truth be told, to support The United States feels less like supporting the ideals of democracy and justice and more like supporting a new wave of fascism, idiocracy and an overall acceptance of degeneracy. The American flag, stars and stripes and general

patriotism is something seemingly corrupted by the "MAGA-sphere." The most important thing you can do as a citizen of the country is to remember it is the people, not the government, that make the nation what it is. Twenty-five years ago today, when the World Trade Center in New York City was attacked by terrorists, we came together as a country and community to raise up all affected by the tragedy. After the attacks in 2001, a Gallup poll found that pride as a nation surged, with American pride rising to 70%. In a time of fear and uncertainty, the country rose above adversity. Today, according to the same Gallup poll, those who have "extreme pride" for the country have fallen to 33%. Pride is directly tied to unity, and in our political climate now, that correlation seems obvious. Going back to the flag, 69% of the people that still hang a flag are Republicans. Only 26% are Democrats. We can't provide a

proper future for the children of America today if unity is this foreign of an idea. Patriotism cannot be a divided concept. As written by activist and historian Howard Zinn in his work "A People's History of the United States: "The cry of the poor is not always just, but if you don't listen to it, you will never know what justice is." To relinquish national pride to the government is detrimental to yourself and to the good and welfare of the country. Those who love this country the most are not the evangelicals praying to the false idols of populism, but the makers of change inspired by a love for what is right. I am well aware of the atrocities and offenses that the U.S. government has committed on both her domestic people as well as the people of foreign countries. I am aware of the monstrous warfare and killing that has been done in the name of — often unjustified — progress. That is wholeheartedly why I believe that being Amer-

ican is a grassroots effort and patriotism comes from the bottom up. To associate patriotism with the government is to spit in the face of the Civil Rights Movement, for those who marched on Washington and those who put their life on the line for racial equality did it all for the sake of an equal America. It would be like telling Sam Cooke his words were irrelevant. To associate patriotism with the government is to discredit the Women's Suffrage Movement and any rationale that countless women had preached to stand up to injustice. The actions of those such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott are rooted in nothing but a desire to straighten their country for a future generation of women. They are the truest Americans. I understand I come at this argument from a rather entitled viewpoint. I'm an upper-middle class white man; I have faced far less adversity in my 19 years of living than most

have within this country's short history. I do think for certain that to conflate patriotism for governmental subservience is not worthwhile. If that is your definition of patriotism, then now is the time for we (the people) to flip that agenda on its head. Those I recall to be the most patriotic musicians of our history are never the ones from the top, but always the working class, protesting heroes. I think of the likes of Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan, always singing about America but never for her governance. Dylan insists in his now infamous "The Times They Are A-Changin'," "The order is rapidly fadin'/ And the first one now/ Will later be last." Should we not follow his lead? Is that not a true form of patriotism? The shakers and movers of history have never given in to anti-patriotic sentiment. That would give this mockery of a government more leverage and power. To feel shameful and hang

your head in defeat is to willingly give our incompetent government more strength to push their false patriotism upon us. To relinquish national pride to another political party is to capitulate to their agenda. Patriotism is the backbone of protest; it is what strips the government of what they believe is theirs. In the words of James Baldwin, "I love America more than any other country in the world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually." So when you turn on the news to see jesters and clowns parade in front of red, white and blue, remember those colors are yours and yours to be proud of. Old Glory has watched over atrocities and violence, but she has also watched the people who belong to the greatest experiment of the world use their democratic power to demand change. Don't let her become a partisan symbol, but one for us all.



Attendees in a crowd wave American flags symbolizing patriotism. 33% of Americans today have extreme pride for their country, according to a Gallup poll. PHOTO COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES