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MADISON, WI - This week, State Representative Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton) talks about Independence Day, as Wisconsinites come together with friends and family to celebrate at parades, barbeques, and festivals.

Audio File of Radio Address

Hello, this is State Representative Dianne Hesselbein with this week's Democratic Radio Address.

Every year on the fourth of July families and friends gather to commemorate one of the most important days in our nation's history. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence.

The document wasn't signed until August, however, the date July 4, 1776 was the date on the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout our new nation. The significance of the date was accentuated by the death of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on the same day on July 4, 1826. It wasn't until 1870 that Congress first declared the fourth of July a national holiday.

We owe the ability to celebrate this day to our founding fathers who had enough courage and tenacity to stand up and boldly declare: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, 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."

Even though we live in a world vastly different from the world of our founding fathers, the truths they set down in the Declaration of Independence are still a reminder of how far we've come.

To put this holiday in perspective, we have to recognize some important truths of today.

Our freedoms are dependent on the men and women in uniform. They, and their families, ensure that our country is safe, by fighting for our principles.

Furthermore, our country must continue to strive for a more perfect union. It is that pursuit of a better future that guided our founders. Our work must continue until every person in our country is able to gain the same opportunities, enjoy the same freedoms, and is treated equally under the law.

We are at a pivotal moment in our history – with challenges previously unseen. Upholding freedom means respecting people from across the globe, especially those seeking to flee oppression in their own country for the promise of America.

This Independence Day, Wisconsinites will come together with friends and family to celebrate at parades, barbeques, and festivals.

But during this time, take a moment to remember our past, recognize our challenges in the present, and work toward a better future.

Thank you.