

WHY EVERYONE SHOULD STAND FOR OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

It makes me proud to sing my National Anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner. Every time I hear it, or sing it, I am reminded of how great it is to be an American. It makes me feel proud to give respect to my country, the greatest country in the world, the United States of America.

To understand the National Anthem and its importance you should first know the history behind it. The Star-Spangled Banner was written by a 35-year-old lawyer-poet from Washington D.C. His inspiration to write this was a flag. More specific it was the flag which flew over Fort McHenry in Baltimore during the 1814 battle at the fort. It was a 15 star, 15 stripe garrison flag. Francis Scott Key wrote the words during the British Bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland.

The British had invaded, and captured, Washington, D.C. and taken William Beanes, who was a doctor, as a prisoner. They held him on one of their British ships off the Baltimore shore. William Beanes friends asked Francis Scott Key to convince the British to release Beanes. Francis Scott Key agreed, went to the British fleet, and succeeded in getting them to agree to his release. Unfortunately, the British were already planning the attack at that time, so they kept both William Beanes and Francis Scott Key instead of releasing them. The night of September 13th – September 14th Francis Scott Key watched the bombardment of Baltimore. He watched this attack from the deck of the British ship where he was being detained. Rain made it hard to see the fort at night, but once it was light he could see the American flag still flying from Fort McHenry. The fort was still standing after the British fired 1800 bombs, rockets and shells at it, even with 400 of them landing inside. Four defenders were killed and 24 were injured. Francis Scott Key, after seeing the flag, started to write words to a poem on an envelope. Key and Beanes were sent ashore and the British fleets withdrew. Francis Scott Key finished his poem and showed it to his wife's relatives in Baltimore. They loved his poem and immediately printed it on flyers to hand out throughout their city. The poem was called "The Defense of Fort McHenry". Before Francis Scott Key knew it, only a few weeks later, the Baltimore newspapers printed his poem. Everyone loved it and it became popular instantly. It was renamed "The Star-Spangled Banner". An actor even sang it to the music of a popular British tune at a public performance in Baltimore. When the Civil War started "The Star-Spangled

Banner” became a popular song nationally. During World War I a drive began in Congress to make it the official anthem of America’s armed forces. It beat out the songs it was up against which were “America the Beautiful” and “Yankee Doodle”. Maryland legislators were the most active groups, and individuals, to get the “Star-Spangled Banner” into law as our country’s first National Anthem. It finally happened when President Herbert Hoover signed it into legislation on March 3, 1931.

The National Anthem has four verses. Each verse ends with the line “O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave” which is exactly why I feel our anthem should truly be respected. It is about a great country, our country, the United States of America. More importantly it honors all the men and women who sacrificed, and still sacrifice, their lives for us every day. Our armed forces are men and women, from all different branches of the military, they are all different heights, they are all different weights, they have skin of all colors, they have different religious beliefs, but they have one thing in common-the love for their country. When you don’t stand for the National Anthem you disrespect all of them. They put it all on the line every day to protect our freedom. Because they do this is the reason you have the right to express your views. It is because of our military, and veterans, that you have freedom of speech, even if you use that freedom to disrespect the flag. The flag that you are disrespecting is the very same flag that they risk lives for every minute of every day. Our men and women of the military do not stop protecting you because you don’t stand for the national anthem, or because they disagree with you. Do you know why that is? It is because they are truly proud to serve our great country.

Personally, I love football. I play it, I watch it, and I read about it. It is very upsetting for me to see someone sit, or take a knee, during the National Anthem. It is even more upsetting when those players are people I look up to in the NFL, or should I say are that I used to look up to. I decided to google some statistics to compare the salaries of a player verse a soldier. I found that the average salary for someone in the military is \$32,156. When I googled the average NFL player salary it is \$2,150,000. That is just for the average player! The highest players are being paid \$24 million. Trust me, I love winning at football. I love to make a great catch, or even better get a touchdown. No matter what kind of play I make, or especially what kind of play I watch a NFL player make, there is no way a soldier should earn

less. You are paying millions to someone who catches a ball, and who you should pay millions to is someone who prevents bombs from dropping on the field. This does not just go for the NFL either. This also means any sports players, actors/actresses, singers, reality tv stars, famous You Tubers, or anyone who has the privilege to live in the greatest country in the world. The sad part is famous people and sports players make more money than the average person in the military. How can that be? Our military leave their families for extended periods of time, they go running into situations that we run out of, some are shot at, some tortured, some prisoners of war. They put their lives on the line every day that they serve our country. Some are even injured, or die, protecting our freedom. To me that deserves a salary of millions of dollars. Not someone who can sing, catch a ball, shoot a 3 pointer, make people laugh by reading a script, or walking around with a camera to film their lives. There are lots of people who are star athletes, amazing singers, funny comedians, great actors/actresses, etc. that just weren't lucky enough to get their big break. However, not everyone can be in the military. Going through boot camp, being away from their families, being deployed, and just the possibility of the danger you may face daily is not easy. If it was easy, or everyone wasn't afraid, then they would do it.

I am not saying that you do not have the right to express your opinion. You are entitled to be upset about issues, or not happy with an election. However none of that has anything to do with our flag and the people who defend it. It is because of the great men and women of our armed forces that you can continue to do so. All I am saying is when you hear our National Anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner", please stand up, put your cover, or your hand on your heart, and salute our flag. For that moment don't think about everything you are mad at in the world. Just remember that you are standing to thank the men and women that continue to protect your rights regardless of how you choose to use those rights. No one wants to stop anyone from protesting, or not use their freedom of speech to talk about it. I know I don't want that, so that's not what this is about to me. It's about when our National Anthem is on respect it. When our National Anthem is over absolutely continue to protest and express your views. Please don't do it during our anthem because that disrespects not just our country, but our military. While you are disrespecting our armed forces, the men & women in our military will still be fighting to make sure you have the right to do so. I for one will stand

every single time I hear the Star-Spangled banner. If the day comes that my legs won't let me stand I will have my family, my unit commander, my gunny, my fellow young marines, or my friends hold me up. I will never forget what our National Anthem means. I am thankful to all the men & women who have served and continue to serve. God Bless America!



