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Mrs. Hart
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English 110

Why Veterans Are Important to our Nation's History and Future

Veterans are the most underappreciated group in America. They put so much on the line and gain very little when they return to society. Despite all of this, they are still relied upon for the defense of our beloved country. They are also important to us because of what they have done, what they will do in their future in the military, and when they come back to society.

First of all, our veterans are very important to our past. I would even say that they are more important than most people realize. Our past has mostly been defined by the conflicts we fought, namely the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the World Wars. Each of these conflicts has permanently altered our identity.

In the beginning of our country, the American Revolution made us Americans. It gave us our nation and made us unique. We broke away from Great Britain because we were tired of them treating us unjustly. We started to change independently of Great Britain and we started to become the nation we are today.

Then about eighty years later, our Civil War made us more unified than ever before. At the start of the war, the states operated independently of each other. We were just a collection of states with the common goal of being free from everyone but ourselves. The United States was even considered plural until the end of the Civil War. Then everyone started saying, "The United States is one country." After the Civil War each state became unified with each other, and there are very few differences between all the states today.

After another fifty years during World War I, Europe was destroyed by the atrocities of war. This was due to new technology being used, regardless of the morality. We stayed out of the war as long as possible. When we finally joined the war, we ensured that our allies would win. The continent had to be rebuilt, and the Americans became a superpower helping the Europeans rebuild. This made us very wealthy and is why we are one of the most dominant countries to this day.

Twenty years later, World War II started. This was fought in Europe and in the Pacific. While fighting the war, we developed several new weapons, and new technology with it. This made us one of the most innovative countries and since then America has been one of the leading countries for research.

All of this would not have been possible without those brave men and women who volunteered and those who were reluctantly drafted. Some of these men and women went off to fight and never came back. Others came back but were not quite the same. Others came back scarred, paralyzed, or even missing limbs. These people know what war is like and I would be willing to bet they do not want anyone else to experience the horrors they experienced. These men and women are the reason we have so many freedoms and rights today. Without them we might still belong to Great Britain, or we might not feel as safe or even be as safe from other countries. They are also the reason we have the freedom of speech, religion, expression, the right to a fair and speedy trial, due process, the right to an attorney, and so many other innumerable rights. These rights and freedoms are what make us Americans and why we take so much in our freedoms and liberties.

Looking to the future, these men and women can literally change the world. Some of the brightest and most intelligent minds are in the military developing new and advanced technology. They are doing this to give us the edge over our enemies that are threatening our country that several million people died defending. We also have several men and women who are now working in business, healthcare, and criminal justice.

In addition to working in society, these men and women are also teaching other Americans. They are mothers and fathers who will raise their children with the valuable lessons they learned while serving. They are also teaching civilians about why our military is important, why we are free, and perhaps most importantly, why our veterans matter.

Our veterans have always been important to us and they will continue to be important to us. They have shaped our past and future. We will continue to rely upon the men and women who step up and say, "I will serve." They will continue to ensure that our country is the land of the free and the home of the brave.

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State of the Union: A Successful, Convincing Speech

President Obama's speech was a surprise. He had already leaked a few ideas that he was going to talk about, but he talked about much more than people thought he would. He put forth some ideas that shocked many people, like focusing on climate change and the economy. He also wanted many things done to help the United States. His message was compelling and said in way that is easy to understand and he accomplished his goals. Overall the president's speech was very convincing and effective because of the content, the way he delivers the speech, and because of speech's purpose.

First of all in his address, President Obama starts off by stating how the country is doing. He then introduces an average American, Rebekah. He talks about how she was doing well before the 2008 recession, and then struggled for a few years and now is doing better than before but not quite enough. The president then starts relating Rebekah to average Americans and how everyone in this country wants their fair shot and wants everyone to "play by the same set of rules". President Obama's speech then takes a turn where he starts proposing laws that he wants passed. All of his proposed laws focus on creating jobs, helping the middle class, and boosting the economy. In particular he focuses on middle class economics or the idea that the American economy does best when the middle class is thriving. He wants to accomplish this by giving families an extra \$3,000 per child in tax refunds and by rewriting the tax laws so the richest Americans pay more and everyone else pays less. He also wants to make community college free and help Americans learn skills to get better jobs. President Obama says that both Democrats and

Republicans have shown free community college can work by pointing to Chicago (Democrat) and Tennessee (Republican). He also mentions that community colleges are working towards helping students get jobs and wants other companies to follow the example of CVS and UPS by offering more positions and benefits to students who want to get a better job. Towards the end of his speech, Obama starts talking about a “better politics”. He says he knows people on both sides and knows that some do not like the current state of Congress because of all the arguing and fundraising. He wants to have political discussions and work things out instead of the arguments devolving into a shouting match and accusing each other of doing this or that. Throughout the speech, he frequently targeted statements to the Republican controlled Congress, urging them to pass a bill that he wants.

In his speech President Obama uses everyday words, phrases, and expressions that the average American can relate to. He does not use long words or words that many Americans would not understand. He even tells Astronaut Scott Kelly, who will be spending a year in space, to “Instagram it”. When he talked about climate change, he addressed those who did not believe it existed. President Obama said that he was not a scientist but knew scientists that believed in global warming. This approach is one the easiest things that average Americans can relate to. He also wants to convince Congress to help the American people. He uses both logic and motivational appeals to accomplish this. He says if Congress thinks that hard working Americans can get by on \$15,000 a year, “Try it”. He also says that Congress should end the embargo against Cuba because the strategy of refusing to trade with them to weaken their economy and end communism is not working, so something else needs to be done. In the beginning he uses Rebekah to illustrate the average American and talks about the financial struggles she has and

uses this to appeal to the values and emotions of all Americans. He also appeals to Americans' emotions by telling companies to hire veterans because they will get the job done.

President Obama's address has a few purposes. He starts by giving the state of affairs in the United States by talking about the wars in the Middle East and later on mentions how our economy is booming. In the middle of the speech he references a speech that he gave in Boston in 2004 where he said that we are not red states or blue states, liberal or conservative, black or white, but we are the United States. He does this to show that the United States is doing well right now, despite how badly things may appear. Throughout his speech he keeps asking Congress to give him a bill, or to pass this law, or to let me do this. It seems that he is finally holding nothing back and is now free to do what he really wants and not just what he is confined to do by the Democratic Party or the pressures of getting re-elected. He also has no majority in either House to start the legislation he wants, so he might not actually get many things passed unless several Republicans dissent and join the Democrats. The president also wants to give hope to Americans in part by wanting to give them more benefits under the law, and by stating the good things that are happening right now. He says that more Americans have found jobs than all other industrialized nations combined. He also wants the Keystone Pipeline passed to help our economy and put even more Americans back to work. He also states that he wants to upgrade our internet and transportation to help our economy and give more Americans jobs. His support for wanting certain laws passed is very good and is mostly directed at the Republicans, to whom he gives very good arguments to, as previously noted.

Overall, Obama clearly wants several things to happen. He clearly stated what he wanted and gave ample support to Americans and especially to Congress. His goal seemed to be to prove

to Americans that we are doing great and to convince Congress to pass the laws necessary to help America. The probability that he gets any laws passed are slim, simply because it is the other party, but President Obama gave plenty of support.