

# Imprimis

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May/June 2013 · Volume 42, Number 5/6

## The Miracle of Freedom

Ted Cruz

United States Senator



**IN 2012, TED CRUZ** was elected as the 34th U.S. Senator from Texas. Prior to that, he served for five years as Solicitor General of Texas and was for five years a partner at one of the nation's largest law firms. He has authored more than 80 U.S. Supreme Court briefs and argued 43 oral arguments, including nine before the U.S. Supreme Court. He has also served as Director of the Office of Policy Planning at the Federal Trade Commission and as Associate Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice. Senator Cruz graduated with honors from Princeton University and with high honors from Harvard Law School, and served as a law clerk to Chief Justice of the Supreme Court William Rehnquist.

**ALSO INSIDE >**  
**A TRIBUTE  
TO  
MARGARET  
THATCHER**

*The following is adapted from a speech delivered at Hillsdale College's 161st Commencement, held in the College's Biermann Athletic Center on May 11, 2013.*

**Today is** a day of celebration. For you graduates, it's a day to celebrate your hard work, your commitment, time, energy, passion, and prayers that you have put in to graduate from Hillsdale College. It's also a day to celebrate the sacrifice and dedication your family has put in to get you here. I am honored to join you today—but let me say I fully recognize that the most forgettable part of this important day is going to be the politician delivering your commencement speech.

This morning I had the opportunity to tour your wonderful campus, and one of the highlights for me was the statue of Margaret Thatcher. I understand that when the statue was unveiled, she sent a letter of praise that read: "Hillsdale College symbolizes everything that is good and true in America. You uphold the principles and cherish the values which have made your country a beacon of hope." I couldn't agree more.

There are commencements being held on campuses all over the country this spring, but this one is different. Hillsdale, it is known across the country, is in a class by itself. Those graduating from other colleges are being told to go out and make something of

themselves. But for the men and women receiving their degrees here today, expectations are higher. Because of the education you received here, you are uniquely prepared to provide desperately needed, principled leadership to your families, your churches, your communities, your country, and your fellow man. While other graduates have been exposed to college courses such as “Lady Gaga and the Sociology of Fame,” you have been grounded in an understanding of our Constitution and of the freedom it was designed to preserve.

\* \* \*

Last month the world lost Baroness Thatcher, and in her honor I’d like to spend a few minutes discussing with you the miracle of freedom.

In the history of mankind, freedom has been the exception. Governed by kings and queens, human beings were told that power starts at the top and flows down; that their rights emanate from a monarch and may be taken away at the monarch’s whim. The British began a revolution against this way of thinking in a meadow called Runnymede in 1215. It was embodied in the Magna Carta, which read: “To all free men of our kingdom we have also granted, for us and our heirs for ever, all the liberties written out below, to have and to keep for them and their heirs . . .” That revolution reached full flower in Philadelphia in 1787, in a Constitution that began from two radical premises.

The first is that our rights come not from kings or

queens—or even from presidents—but from God. As the Declaration of Independence put it, “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, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Second, in the Constitution, America’s Founders inverted the understanding of sovereignty. Power comes not from the top down, but up, from “We the People,” and governing authority for those in political office is limited to set periods subject to elections. As James Madison explained in *Federalist* 51: “If men were angels, no government would be necessary . . . . In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.”

Even from my short time in elected office, I can assure you there are no angels in Washington, D.C. And that is why Thomas Jefferson said the “chains of the Constitution” should bind the mischief of government. Only when government is limited are rights protected, the rule of law honored, and freedom allowed to flourish.

You who are graduating from Hillsdale are familiar with these ideas. As the late conservative writer and educator Russell Kirk observed, “Hillsdale does not subscribe to the notion that all books published before 1900 are obsolete. Against all odds, the College speaks up—as it did during the nineteenth century—for ‘permanent things.’”

**Imprimis** (im-pri-mis),  
[Latin]: in the first place

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And with those as our foundation, what has freedom wrought?

\* \* \*

Simply put, the American free market system is the greatest engine for prosperity and opportunity that the world has ever seen. Freedom works. No other nation on Earth has allowed so many millions to come with nothing and achieve so much. In the centuries before the American Revolution, the average human lived on between one and three dollars a day, no matter whether one lived in Europe, Asia, Africa, or North or South America. But from that point on—from the beginning of the American experiment—for the first time in human history, per capita income in a few countries began to grow rapidly, and nowhere more so than in the United States.

Over the last two centuries, U.S. growth rates have far outpaced growth rates throughout the world, producing per capita incomes about six times greater than the world average and 50 percent higher than those in Europe. Put another way, the United States holds 4.5 percent of the world's population, and produces a staggering 22 percent of the world's output—a fraction that has remained stable for two decades, despite growing competition from around the world.

This predominance isn't new. The late British economist Angus Maddison observed that American per capita income was already the highest in the world in the 1830s. This is a result of America's economic freedom, which enables entrepreneurs and small businesses to flourish.

Today the U.S. dollar is the international reserve currency. English is the world's standard language for commerce. The strength of our economy allows us to maintain the mightiest military in the world. And U.S. culture—film, TV, the Internet—is preminent in the world (although for many of our TV shows and movies, perhaps we owe the world an apology). A disproportionate number of the world's great inventions

in medicine, pharmaceuticals, electronics, the Internet, and other technology come from America, improving, expanding, and saving lives. America was where the telephone, the automobile, the airplane, and the iPhone were invented. Americans were the first to walk on the moon.

But most importantly, freedom produces opportunity. And I would encourage each of you to embrace what I call opportunity conservatism, which means that we should look at and judge every proposed domestic policy with a laser focus on how it impacts the least among us—how it helps the most vulnerable Americans climb the economic ladder.

The political left in our country seeks to reach down the hand of government and move people up the economic ladder. This attempt is almost always driven by noble intentions. And yet it never, ever works. Conservatives, in contrast, understand from experience that the only way to help people climb the economic ladder is to provide them the opportunity to pull themselves up one rung at a time.

As President Reagan said, "How can we love our country and not love our countrymen, and loving them, reach out a hand when they fall, heal them when they're sick, and provide opportunity to make them self-sufficient so they will be equal in fact and not just in theory?"

Historically, our nation has enjoyed remarkable economic mobility. About 60 percent of the households that were in the lowest income quintile in 1999 were in a higher quintile ten years later. During the same decade, almost 40 percent of the richest households fell to a lower quintile. This is a nation where you can rise or fall. It is a nation where you can climb the economic ladder based not on who you are born to, or what class you are born into, but based on your talents, your passion, your perseverance, and the content of your character.

Economic freedom and the prosperity it generates reduce poverty like nothing else. Studies consistently confirm that countries with higher levels of economic

freedom have poverty levels as much as 75 percent lower than countries that are less free.

Thanks to America's free market system, the average poor American has more living space than the typical non-poor person in Sweden, France, or the United Kingdom. In 1970, the year I was born, only 36 percent of the U.S. population enjoyed air conditioning. Today, 80 percent of poor households in America have air conditioning; and 96 percent of poor parents say that their children were never hungry at any time in the preceding year because they could not afford food.

Now, of course, there is still need in America and throughout the world, and all of us should act to help our fellow man. But more and more government is not the way to do this. To insist otherwise is to ignore the fact that all major European nations have higher levels of public spending than the United States, and that all of them are poorer.

Nor are human beings happiest when they're taken care of by the state. Indeed, areas under the yoke of dependency on government are among the least joyous parts of our society. The story of Julia that we saw depicted in last year's election—the story of cradle-to-grave dependency on government—is not an attractive utopia. Men and women flourish, instead, when afforded the equal opportunity to work and create and accomplish.

I remember some time ago when former Texas Senator Phil Gramm was participating in a Senate hearing on socialized medicine, and the witness there explained that government would best take care of people. Senator Gramm gently demurred and said, "I care more about my family than anyone else does." And this wide-eyed witness said, "Oh no, Senator. I care as much about your children." Senator Gramm smiled and said, "Really? What are their names?"

\* \* \*

It is precisely because economic freedom and opportunity outperform centralized planning and regulation that so many millions have risked everything

for a chance at the American dream.

Fifty-five years ago, my father fled Cuba, where he had been imprisoned and tortured—including having his teeth kicked out—as a teenager. Today my father is a pastor in Dallas. When he landed in Austin, Texas, in 1957, he was 18. He couldn't speak a word of English. He had \$100 sewn into his underwear. He went and got a job washing dishes and made 50 cents an hour. He worked seven days a week and paid his way through the University of Texas, and then he got a job, and then he went on to start a small business.

Now imagine if, at that time, the minimum wage had been two dollars an hour. He might never have had the opportunity to get that dishwashing job and work his way through school and work his way up from there. I cannot tell you how many times I've thanked God that some well-meaning liberal didn't greet him when he landed in Austin and put his arm around him and say: "Let me take care of you. Let me make you dependent on government. Let me sap your self-respect—and by the way, don't bother learning English."

When I was a kid, my father used to say to me: "When we faced oppression in Cuba, I had a place to flee to. If we lose our freedom here, where do we go?" For my entire life, my dad has been my hero. But what I find most incredible about his story is how commonplace it is. Every one of us here today has a story like that. We could line up at this podium and each of us tell the story of our parents or grandparents or our great, great, great grandparents. We are all children of those who risked everything for liberty. That's the DNA of what it means to be an American—to value freedom and opportunity above all.

In 1976, Margaret Thatcher delivered her "Britain Awake" speech. In it, she said: "There are moments in our history when we have to make a fundamental choice. This is one such moment, a moment when our choice will determine the life or death of our kind of society and the future of our children. Let's ensure that our children

will have cause to rejoice that we did not forsake their freedom.”

If we don't fight to preserve our liberty, we will lose it. The men and women graduating here today, blessed with a world-class liberal arts education and a Hillsdale love of learning, are perfectly situated to lead the fight, to tell and retell the story of the miracle of freedom to so many Americans—so many young Americans in particular—who've never heard that story from the media, or in their schools, and certainly not from Hollywood.

Mrs. Thatcher continued: “Of course, this places a burden on us, but it is one that we must be willing to bear if we want our freedom to survive.”

Throughout history, we have carried the torch for freedom. At Hillsdale, you have been prepared to continue to do so, that together we may ensure that America remains a shining city on a hill, a beacon to the world of hope and freedom and opportunity.

Thank you and God bless you. ■

## A Tribute to Margaret Thatcher

Larry P. Arnn

President, Hillsdale College

*The following is adapted from remarks delivered at a ceremony in honor of Margaret Thatcher sponsored by the Hillsdale chapter of Young Americans for Freedom on April 22, 2013.*

**Margaret Thatcher** was born in 1925, in October. Her father was a grocer. She was born in Lincolnshire, in the middle of England. She studied chemistry at Oxford. In 1959 she got elected to Parliament for Finchley, which she represented until she retired from the House of Commons in 1992. She's one of the great prime ministers in British history, and one of the longest serving, at least in continuous times.

I happened to live in England when Mrs. Thatcher's party won the 1979 election and she became prime minister—the first woman to do so. It was better than watching sports on television. There was nothing like it. Every day she would do something big, and every day she would not apologize for it, even when reporters would press her. You just never saw anyone so direct or clear of speech.



*President Arnn addresses students and faculty in front of the statue of Prime Minister Thatcher on the Hillsdale campus.*

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Mrs. Thatcher faced a situation in Britain that was devastating, much like the situation we have today in our own country. What she did was to make plain that situation and to place great faith in the people of her country, and then when they were asked to choose, they chose for her over and over again. Indeed, she never lost an election after she won the first one. She only lost her job as prime minister because her party got tired of her. They were not as strong as she was and they threw her out, and she left very nobly.

I'll tell you two quick stories about her. The first concerns a coal strike led by a very left wing man named Arthur Scargill, who was the head of the coal miners union. That union was powerful because people got their heat from coal, and if the union didn't mine coal in the winter, people got cold.

The major political party opposed to Mrs. Thatcher's Conservative party, the Labor party, was basically controlled at that time in its governing structure by the labor unions, and the worst and most aggressive of them was the coal miners. So the Prime Minister

stood largely alone, and great powers were arrayed against her. And what she did was store up a bunch of coal to get ready for a strike because she knew Mr. Scargill was going to call one, and he did call one. The coal mining regions of the country had thousands of people picketing, and parts of the country basically ceased to function.

This had happened many times in the past, and the government had capitulated. But this time there was Mrs. Thatcher at the head of the government, and there was something called the Battle of Orgreave, in which five thousand miners clashed with five thousand policemen. The policemen triumphed, and there were over 100 casualties. That was a battle for the soul of the country, and the Prime Minister was very clear about it. She explained that the stakes were enormous and that the government was going to stand up for the country. There was no wiggle in her. She didn't budge. And what happened was that a large part of the membership of the miners union broke off, formed their own union, and made a deal that was in their interest but was not what Scargill had demanded. So

Mrs. Thatcher basically broke that strike, and she broke that kind of unionism. The other kind—the kind where people act under laws that are fair, and where unions don't take over parts of the country or the property of others—that kind of unionism thrives in Britain today. And so far there has not been an effort to bring back the destructive kind.

My second story concerns terrorism. You probably know that Mrs. Thatcher was almost killed when IRA terrorists put a bomb in her hotel during the annual Conservative Party Conference in 1984. They checked into that hotel months in advance and planted an explosive device set to go off near where the Prime Minister slept. It did go off, and it killed five people, but Mrs. Thatcher was working late and her life was spared.

IRA terrorists had previously killed one of her best friends, a man named Airey Neave, a distinguished soldier in World War II and one of the few men to escape the German POW camp at Colditz. He was very close to Mrs. Thatcher, and he was the Shadow Secretary for Northern Ireland. Shortly before she became prime minister, the terrorists placed a bomb in Neave's car set to explode when the car was at a certain angle coming out of the parking lot underneath the House of Commons, and Airey Neave was killed, having survived the Nazis.

So Margaret Thatcher had strong reasons to oppose terrorism. And when it happened that several IRA terrorists, the key one being a man named Bobby Sands, went on a hunger strike in the Maze prison in Northern Ireland—they were demanding to be classified as political prisoners rather than as criminals—she stood firm as they starved themselves to death. Over and over, she stated her position forthrightly: “Crime is crime is crime. It is not political. It is crime.” And what that meant was that those terrorists had chosen the wrong time to go on a hunger strike.

I'll tell you what I think all that means. I've thought about this most of my adult life, and much of what I think about it is informed by having watched Mrs. Thatcher. We live in an age when a new kind of government has been invented, and it's not so much that it has different aims, although it does have many different aims, but that it proceeds by a different method—through rules made by so-called experts, who gather the forces of government over themselves.

There's an agency that has been created recently in the United States, and that agency does not get its budget from the Congress of the United States, but from a percentage of the revenues of the Federal Reserve, which gets *its* revenues as a government monopoly bank. This new agency has regulatory power that may affect us as a college and will certainly affect each of us as individuals. And Congress is forbidden to hold hearings on the budget of that agency, and that agency routinely refuses inquiries from Congress about its operations. That means it is sealed off from popular control. And the weight and scale of the government run by this new method means that there's some chance that the government is going to overwhelm the society. That is the very abnegation of liberal politics—liberal in the sense of a free people managing those who govern them because human beings are born equal, with equal rights.

The greatest defender and servant of this principle of liberal government that I have seen in my lifetime is Margaret Thatcher, and I pray that we will see the likes of her again, because the battle over this kind of government is upon us again. For making clear that the right way of government is to operate under a constitution, and under the control of free people, and for fighting for constitutionalism more effectively than anyone in our time, we today remember Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven. ■



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#### DID YOU KNOW?

The over-life-size bronze statue of Margaret Thatcher on the Hillsdale campus, pictured on page five of this issue, was dedicated in May 2008, and remains the only statue of Mrs. Thatcher in North America.

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