

Continuing to fight to reach the ideal

According to the World Justice Project, research shows that rule of law correlates to higher economic growth, greater peace, less inequality, improved health outcomes, and more education.

Ideally, the rule of law ensures that no entity — including the government itself, prominent business and political leaders — is above the law. Everyone should be treated equally under the law and held accountable to the same laws. All laws should be enforced fairly, by an independent judiciary. Basic human rights should be protected.

No country, including the United States, is perfect when it comes to the rule of law. As illustrated in this short series, the ideal of forming a “more perfect union” is still very much a work in progress. Repeatedly, in our nation’s history, ordinary citizens have challenged authority to seek to correct an injustice.

With a quick scan of any newspaper, one can find examples of inequality under the law. But, examples of ordinary citizens speaking out and openly protesting to protect and defend the rights of others can also be found in those same pages.

From student-led protests seeking changes in gun laws following mass shootings to marchers proclaiming a need for police reforms following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others, people across the United States have demonstrated the need to continue to advance the rule of law.

In her poem, “The Hill We Climb,” read at President Biden’s inauguration, Amanda Gorman stated, “Somehow we’ve weathered and witnessed, a nation that isn’t broken, but simply unfinished.”

As Ms. Gorman finished her poem with these words of hope — The new dawn blooms as we free it, For there is always light, if only we’re brave enough to see it
If only we’re brave enough to be it — let us remember that it is up to each of us to be brave enough to protect and defend the rule of law, not just for ourselves but for everyone, now and for the future.

Newspaper Activities: Look for current examples of inequality under the law. What, if anything, is being done to remedy this injustice?

Look for news reports of individuals or groups of people standing up for what they believe is fair. Select one, do you agree or disagree with them and why?

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