

# Manassas Tea Party 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event Remarks

September 11, 2015

MTP Chairman Dan Arnold

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Good evening, my name is Dan Arnold and I am the chairman of the Manassas Tea Party.

Our mission **has** been and **is** to:

- INFORM about the issues of the day,
- INFLUENCE friends and neighbors to engage and
- INSPIRE those around us with a message of hope

Tonight we have much to celebrate and much too commemorate. We celebrate the amazing fact that the Manassas Tea Party is still going strong after 5 years of challenges (and successes). We celebrate the valiant commitment to liberty of three special people:

- The incredible Virginia farmer who shook the pillars of power and continues to advocate for private property rights, Martha Boneta;
- The vaunted defender of federalism in our beloved commonwealth, former Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli;
- And the tireless, fearless, irrepressible freedom fighter from the Lone Star State, congressman Louie Gohmert.

We also will remember tonight. We commemorate and lift up those Americans who have gone before us and who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Particularly on this solemn day of September 11<sup>th</sup> we remember that day 14 years ago, when hate and terror was overcome by love, sacrifice and a rekindling of the American spirit.

A little background on the Manassas Tea Party: We founded our little group in the Spring of 2010

- The tea party movement was at its apex
- The grass roots had hope and was fired up for action

We like untold numbers of regular, every day Americans decided to organize a non-profit group so that we could make a difference. The president's Internal Revenue Service had other plans for us however as our tax status was held in limbo from May 2010, to December 2012! Answers to preposterously absurd and intrusive questions were required, such as: "Provide the names of all your donors and how much they donated; Provide a list of all topics that have been discussed at all of your past meetings; Provide a list of names of all volunteers at all events and what they were asked to do." Of course these were impossible to comply with and were not the types of requirements demanded of "left leaning" applicant groups. A clear double standard.

The impact? We weren't sure how we could and should operate. We were firmly committed to following the rules but not having an identity blessed by the almighty IRS, we weren't sure if or how to raise money. Activities were curtailed; interest in staying involved with our group waned.

We are still recovering from this clearly intentional targeting but after 2012, we regained our footing and began to get active again. We are proud to say we have been involved in seeking legal retribution as participants in a class action lawsuit against the IRS being carried out by ACLJ, the American Center for Law and Justice, Jay Sekulow's fine organization.

Some highlights from the past 5 years? We have been a constant voice for reducing the property tax burden at the local level. That fight seems to be never ending in our beloved City of Manassas.

In this very space, we held one of the largest "political" gatherings in the history of our town when over 1500 people gathered to celebrate the constitution. (Ken Cuccinelli and Bob Marshall were featured speakers on that wonderful day) in June of 2010.

Later that year, when Gerry Connolly was running for another term as congressman from Virginia's 11<sup>th</sup> district, we produced a series of spoof videos modeled after the hit television program "Intervention" in which we expressed our love and concern for brother Gerry as he struggled with his terrible addiction to taxing and spending.

We have conducted numerous debates and candidate forums over the years, providing our neighbors the opportunity to ask political aspirants the questions important to them. MTP sponsored one of the most well-attended events in our history last year as our own Delegate Bob Marshall "threw down" with Michael Farris on the issue of Article V, The Convention of States. Those who were able to get inside the packed house are still buzzing over the spirited repartee between the two men and most agreed they learned more on the subject that night than they could've imagined.

Let us look back for a moment on the history of the moment at large. TWICE, now, the grass roots or "the base" or the Tea Party movement, has, through activism and through the ballot box, brought dramatic change to Washington. First, shifting the balance of power in the House in 2010 and then the US Senate in 2014. Real, positive change had at last come to Washington.....right?

Well, we've had debt ceiling increases, unimaginable crushing debt, 94 million Americans are now missing from the workforce, illegal executive action after illegal executive action, illegal presidential appointments, a department of justice that targets "enemies" of the administration, an IRS that has been weaponized to punish conservatives (no one has gone to jail), a massive cover up of the deaths of four Americans in Benghazi who very likely could have been rescued (no one has gone to jail), Americans robbed of their healthcare plans by a government that promised them they could keep them. We are in the midst of a federally-engineered race war and a war on law enforcement, we've had veterans banned from their memorials, we've had a mountain fecklessly renamed, the NSA has been caught spying on all Americans (no one has gone to jail) and an organization that has been caught trafficking in the body parts of innocent babies continues to be funded with millions of our tax dollars. I could go on all night. But last I will mention an utterly illegal treaty that will arm the leading state sponsor of terrorism. And this being enabled by the opposition leadership in Congress!

Friends, it is not an exaggeration to say that Liberty has never been more threatened in the almost 240 years since we declared our independence from a far-away European power.

We gather here tonight around a common theme. To CHERISH our Liberty.

And to rededicate ourselves to protecting the freedoms that so many of our forebears died to bequeath to us. It would be easy and understandable, given the transgressions hurled against the American people, with so little opposition, to throw in the towel.

But too many sacrifices have been made, by our Framers, by hundreds of thousands of brave soldiers down through the decades and yes, by first responders 14 years ago who ran up smoke-filled stairs while everyone else was running down. In the context of these sacrifices, we have no excuse and no other choice but to double down on our efforts to preserve our community, our commonwealth and our Republic.

We hope tonight that you are informed and inspired. Let us look back on what has been handed to us, on the torch that has been passed on, and strengthened, not only by what was accomplished by those in the past who faced terrible adversity, but also AROUND us. Let us be encouraged in the fight when we see the Martha Boneta's, the Ken Cuccinellis, the Louie Gohmert's of the world doing the dirty work in the trenches. And let us

look to each other, the millions of regular American Joe's and Jane's, who are with us as we carry on in the noble American cause that began way back in 1776: the struggle for freedom.

I close with the well-known but ever-powerful quote of the late Ronald Reagan:

**Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.**

Thank you.