

Today is a good day to read the Declaration of Independence that we celebrate on July 4. The Declaration reminds us why the United States exist: Because we believe that all people "are created equal." For 233 years, United States citizens have fought, died, and lived to make certain that equal opportunity would be available to all Americans.

So is there any greater principle upon which the success of America depends? On July 4, we celebrate our freedom. We only have freedom, however, as long as we continue to believe in and protect equal opportunity. Without equal opportunity, America's bedrock would crumble.

This is why I am so proud to be an EEO attorney. I help employers grow the roots of freedom by implementing policies of diversity and opportunity while guarding against practices that would threaten our opportunity and freedom. Thomas Jefferson wrote about concerns stemming from a Government's abuse, but employers in our capitalist society can do nearly as much harm as Government by preventing equal opportunity. And employers that provide equal opportunity can do as much or more good than a Government providing equal opportunity.

When employers violate the rights of employees to enjoy equal opportunity, I am proud to help employees vindicate their rights. Many believe that a victim of employment discrimination has suffered little more than a minor, personal indignity. This is short sighted. The victim of employment discrimination has suffered an injury that America believes is worth dying for to prevent. This is an injury of the highest magnitude in America. The continued prosperity of America depends on preventing against the injury and remedying it when it happens.

Sadly, many judges who fill our courts today seem to be among the group that at best gives lip service to how important anti-discrimination laws are and at worst, do all that a judge can do to limit or eliminate the laws' impact. But the history of our country is that we have consistently chosen to send our sons, daughters, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives, and husbands to die as soldiers in the name of freedom and equal opportunity. So why do some courts so routinely deny employees who claim discrimination the benefit of trial by jury? After all, America declared its independence from England in part because the King had deprived "us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury."

Among America's many, good, laws, none should make us more proud to enforce and abide by than those that prohibit discrimination and insure equal opportunity. It is at the core of our

continuing, success as the "Great Experiment." On this Day of Freedom, I am proud to help the Great Experiment continue to succeed.