

As the third African American to read Washington's Farewell address before their Chamber and as a great grand son of a slave, I am deeply honored to share this historic message with my colleagues. This Senate tradition represents an opportunity for all of us to reflect upon the things that all Americans hold dear - liberty, equality, justice and patriotism.

Too often, we let partisan differences overshadow our common interests and cloud our collective judgment. So, as we pause today to observe this tradition, I feel we should see President Washington's words as both a warning and a source of strength. Washington's concerns remain as real as ever before, and we must be vigilant in protecting our national unity. But we should not forget that America has weathered many storms in the past. If we stay true to the principles this country has always held dear, I share Washington's steadfast belief that we can rise to meet any challenge that lies ahead.

Roland W. Burris

U.S. Senator - Illinois 2/22/2010