



AMERICAN VILLAGE
CITIZENSHIP TRUST
CITIZENS ★ LEADERS ★ STEWARDS

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Even as America celebrates the 225th birthday of the Constitution, there are dire signs of a growing national amnesia – a crisis involving our Nation’s history, our national memory and identity.

On Monday, September 17, the American Village – a national history and civics education center founded in 1999 and headquartered in Montevallo, Alabama -- will convene a National Summit on Keeping the Republic to kick off a year of conversation around the country with citizens and leaders addressing the questions: *Just how well are “we the people” doing in “keeping” the Republic? And what should we be doing to better serve our Nation as citizens and leaders?*

Mrs. Laura Bush is National Honorary Chair of the Summit and will keynote the event by video. Mary Bomar, former Director of the U. S. National Park Service, and American biographer Richard Brookhiser are also speaking.

American Village founder and CEO Tom Walker will speak on “Reclaiming American Memory and Identity.” He will say:

When the Constitutional Convention ended 225 years ago Benjamin Franklin wisely said that ours is ‘...a Republic, if you can keep it.’ George Washington called our system of liberty and self-government an ‘experiment in the hands of the American people.’ Each generation has faced the challenge to keep the Republic and to make the experiment work.

For three decades a number of serious and credible alarms have sounded: America is facing a growing national amnesia. As an example, the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (2010) shows that 55% of America’s high school seniors do not have even a ‘basic’ knowledge of American history.

Our choice whether to address this challenge or to ignore it will have extraordinary consequences for our country. The duty that calls us, in this hour, on our watch, is to reclaim American memory and identity and answer Franklin’s challenge to be keepers of the Republic.

The American Village will release a free 56-page report summarizing the challenge and making recommendations on how to strengthen teaching American history and civics to young people. A downloadable copy will be available Monday at www.americavillage.org .

In prepared remarks Mrs. Bush, as Honorary Chair of the Summit, challenges all Americans to be “keepers of the Republic” and says:

The Constitution we celebrate unites us to “form a more perfect Union” and to “secure the blessings of liberty” for ourselves and our posterity. The truth is: liberty is hard work, and it’s our work right now.

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