Why the Constitution and Rule of Law Are Vital to our Democratic Republic.

"We the people…" With three short words to begin our nation's most important document, the Framers were able to capture the essence of the Great American Experiment. Our nation was founded by the people, and it was designed to work for all. Only through every citizen buying into this notion has our country succeeded. The Constitution is the framework for our nation that outlines how to protect the rights of the people, serve the people, and never let anyone become above the people.

In the Bill of Rights, the Constitution states citizens' right to express their views and challenge the government. Democratic participation of the citizenry is what keeps our country together. It is our best defense against the forces that seek to undermine our institutions. By establishing a democratic system, the Constitution ensures that no matter who passes through government over time, the power will always stay with the people. Outlining rights is important, but it is in vain without safeguards that prevent their violation. In creating a meticulous system of checks and balances, the Framers secured the survival of our republic. The creation of three equally powerful branches that keep the others in line is one of our nation's greatest achievements. The true test of a nation is how it responds in the face of a corrupt power. Our three branches guarantee that we will come out on the other side no matter what tyrannical force we are working against. To see the importance of the checks and balances in the Constitution, we need look no further than the current administration. In the early days of the second Trump Administration, the President unleashed a slew of questionable executive orders. Without our strong system, the United States may have had to accept these decrees without any ability to challenge them. But the Constitution empowers us to challenge things that go against it. For example, President Trump's executive order to end birthright citizenship has been blocked by

multiple federal judges because of its unconstitutionality. The order is in the midst of numerous other legal challenges and is unlikely to be upheld. Because of our system established by the Constitution, we are able to fight back against undemocratic actions.

The rule of law is integral to the health of our democracy because it protects us from tyrannical rule. Our nation is based on equality. As Americans, our identity is tied to our freedom to live a life without fear of unjust rule. All of this would come crumbling down if we weren't all bound by the same set of laws. When one man is above others, you can no longer call yourself a democracy. The despotic rule of one person over everyone else is the antithesis of our republic. Our Framers knew this and made sure to protect against the rise of "kings" through the impeachment process. Today, the rule of law is being challenged more than ever. Donald Trump was facing numerous federal charges he was set to appear in court for. With his election, most of these cases have been dismissed. By telling the nation that you can escape justice, we are telling people that not everyone has to play by the same rules. This is a dangerous precedent for our country. I hope that we will soon return to the time when presidents were treated like the citizens that they took an oath to serve.

Although the future of our nation may seem uncertain, I choose to believe in the good nature of Americans. The overwhelming majority of us seek to uphold the ideals of the Constitution and abide by the rule of law. In a nation where the power resides with the people, I am confident we will rise out of these dark times with a renewed democratic vigor. As our Founders showed us, when "We the people" band together against the tyrannical few, we can't lose.