

Republicans should try to avoid feeling smug about the president's memory problems. So he thinks the leaders of France and Germany are individuals who've been dead for decades, he confused the presidents of Mexico and Egypt, and he can't quite recall the years he was vice president. At 81, Joe Biden is the oldest man to serve in the presidency and it shows.

But like our president, America too is suffering from memory loss. Each February we celebrate Presidents Day, which takes two real holidays and rolls them into one that's surreal. Once upon a time, we observed the birthdays of George Washington, the man more responsible than any other for our independence, and Abraham Lincoln, who saved the Union during the Civil War. Now we have a holiday to honor everyone who ever held the office, including such "towering" figures as William Henry Harrison, James Buchanan and Jimmy Carter. Like tearing down statues, this is part of the process of erasing our history.

A survey by the Woodrow Wilson National Foundation Fellowship shows that 37 percent believe Benjamin Franklin, not Thomas Edison, invented the lightbulb. In a 2017 survey, 43 percent of college graduates did not know that something called the First Amendment guarantees something called freedom of speech. And to think there are those who question the value of higher education.

This is the product of a relentless assault on teaching American history. In his book, "A More Perfect Union: The Moral and Cultural Case for Teaching the Great American Story," Timothy S. Goeglein identifies the principal culprit as Marxist historian Howard Zinn, whose "People's History of the United States" is assigned reading for millions of high school and college students. Zinn, coincidentally one of my professors at Boston University back in the 1960s, used history to indoctrinate. He taught that the American saga is one of genocide, exploitation and aggression. His book should be subtitled: "Learn How to Hate Your Country in 729 Pages."

Zinn's successors include author Nikole Hannah-Jones, a race-hustler whose 1619 Project asserts that the most salient development in our history was when the first slave was brought here. If U.S. history—real histo-

# Saving the Union

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*By Don Feder*

ry, not Marxist mythology—was taught in our schools, Americans might understand the significance of that revolutionary document, the Declaration of Independence. They might comprehend the genius of the Constitution

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*Painting of George Washington by Charles Willson Peale in 1776, commissioned by John Hancock to commemorate the victories of Trenton and Princeton during the Revolutionary War. (Brooklyn Museum, New York.) The painter considered the general to be "a man of very few words...uncommonly modest, very industrious...prudent." And this is the man who defeated the British, and with our other Founding Fathers gave us this constitutional republic.*

and what it took to fashion 13 disparate states into a nation.

They would learn something of our westward expansion, of the sacrifices made by pioneers and settlers to create a new civilization, about the great cattle drives, the building of the transcontinental railroad and the interstate highway system. They'd

learn about the wars we fought to liberate humanity from absolute monarchy and totalitarian tyranny. They might come to understand the unprecedented prosperity achieved when humanity is freed to innovate, produce and build.

For an individual to forget his past is sad. For a people to forget theirs is tragic. In consequence of this indoctrination, in a 2021 poll, only 36 percent of adults 18 to 24 said they were "proud to be American," compared to 86 percent of those over 65, who went to school before hard-core brainwashing began.

The war on American history is by design. It's easier to control those who are ignorant of the past. It's easier to manipulate citizens who don't understand that in this country, the word "insurrection" grew up in a certain context which had nothing to do with protests over vote counting. People are more pliable when they don't understand how government is supposed to work—that there's something terribly wrong with a system that creates speech-suppression zones around abortion clinics but allows protesters to wail like banshees outside the homes of Supreme Court justices.

To pick a contemporary example, 37 percent of those under 35 are more sympathetic to the Palestinians than Israel, the highest level of support for the former since Gallup began polling here. That support might be eroded if more Americans knew that there has never been an independent state of Palestine in the region and that Israel's claim to its land goes back over 3,000 years.

Americans don't know much history, and they never will as long as the left controls education. It's in its interest to keep us wandering around in a fog. And so it is with no small measure of irony that I wish you a happy Millard Fillmore Day. ■

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