Good Afternoon,

Today, we are exploring the issue of America’s Second Founding as result of the profound changes made in the Constitution after the Civil War. We agree that this was the Second Founding because of the following profound impacts:

* The increase of the power of the federal government over the states..
* The promises made in the DOI that “that all men are created equal and they are endowed by their Created with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” and the Constitution’s promise of “blessings of liberty” were finally addressed.
* The principle of a national citizenship whose members enjoyed the equal protection of the laws were addressed.

Originally, the Constitution recognized the institute of slavery by counting slaves in states’ population for representation in Congress (**Article 1 Section 2**), protecting domestic slavery by banning importation of slaves and not addressing slave trade until 1808 (**Article 1 Section 9**), and requiring the return of runaway slaves (**Article 4 Section 2**).

With the end of the Civil War, the **13th Amendment** banned slavery and gave Congress the power to enforce that legislation.

According to **Article 4 section 2** of the constitution the citizens of each state are entitled to all privileges of citizens in several states however persons in servitude were not included because of Chief Justice Taney’s ruling in the **Dred Scott Decision.**

Finally under the 14th Amendment, the national government assumed basic responsibility for defining American national citizenship and protecting due process and the equality clause.

T**he 15th Amendment,** right to vote for male citizens, led to African American male participation in the political process during Reconstruction.  In 1915, **Guinn vs. US** outlawed grandfather laws and poll taxes.

Just as the **First Founding of America** did not happen overnight, neither did the **Second Founding.** However, it did provide a **stable foundation** for the changes to come. Despite challenges to the Civil Rights Amendments, such as the Black Codes, Plessy v. Ferguson, Jim Crow laws, literacy tests, poll taxes, and the grandfather clauses eventually d**escendants of American slaves would benefit from the promises of the Second Founding.**

The passage of landmark statutes like the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, the Fair Housing Act, and and Dr. King’s leadership in the Civil Rights Movement led to the once never imagined possible appointment of Thurgood  Marshall to the Supreme Court and the presidency of Barack Obama.

The struggle continues today as new groups, such as the **LGBT community**, continue to lay claim to the **Second Founding’s core promises**. In **Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)**, the Supreme Court ruled **that Gay marriages are legal**.

We agree this was **America’s Second Founding** as result of the profound changes made in the Constitution after the Civil War. Changes that eventually spread across the nation. While the original intent was focused on the rights of African Americans, the civil rights amendments were written broad enough to be inclusive of groups that were not even thought of at that time. This second founding made it possible for the United States to be a nation that welcomes all walks of life.