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Kent Hampton's Capitol Report November 13, 2013

NOVEMBER 14TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted by
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Lincoln's [Gettysburg Address](#)

On November 19, 1863, at the dedication of a military cemetery at Gettysburg, [Pennsylvania](#), during the [American Civil War](#), President [Abraham Lincoln](#) delivers one of the most memorable speeches in American history. In just 272 words, Lincoln brilliantly and movingly reminded a war-weary public why the Union had to fight, and win, the [Civil War](#).

The [Battle of Gettysburg](#), fought some four months earlier, was the single bloodiest battle of the Civil War. Over the course of three days, more than 45,000 men were killed, injured, captured or went missing. The battle also proved to be the turning point of the war: General [Robert E. Lee](#)'s defeat and retreat from Gettysburg marked the last Confederate invasion of Northern territory and the beginning of the Southern army's ultimate decline.

Charged by Pennsylvania's governor, Andrew Curtin, to care for the Gettysburg dead, an attorney named David Wills bought 17 acres of pasture to turn into a cemetery for the more than 7,500 who fell in battle. Wills invited Edward Everett, one of the most famous orators of the day, to deliver a speech at the cemetery's dedication. Almost as an afterthought, Wills also sent a letter to Lincoln—just two

weeks before the ceremony—requesting "a few appropriate remarks" to consecrate the grounds.

At the dedication, the crowd listened for two hours to Everett before Lincoln spoke. Lincoln's address lasted just two or three minutes. The speech reflected his redefined belief that the Civil War was not just a fight to save the Union, but a struggle for freedom and equality for all, an idea Lincoln had not championed in the years leading up to the war. This was his stirring conclusion: "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Reception of Lincoln's [Gettysburg Address](#) was initially mixed, divided strictly along partisan lines. Nevertheless, the "little speech," as he later called it, is thought by many today to be the most eloquent articulation of the democratic vision ever written.

Without a doubt the words President Lincoln spoke were sincere and heart driven, his acknowledgment that this nation was founded under the principals of God was most certainly true, and must continue to be true today. This great nation was not created by Democrats or Republicans, but "one nation under God". The fox new special with Billy Graham, that aired on Thursday 11/7, was inspiration and timely, identifying to us that we are presently on a one way street, going the wrong way..See ya in church Sunday!

As always, it is an honor to serve you in the Missouri House. If you would like to discuss any issue, please call 573-751-3629. You can also email me at kent.hampton@house.mo.gov . I look forward to hearing from you.

LAST UPDATED ON NOVEMBER 14TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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