

I stand.

It's so much a part of me, that I don't even think about it. I will always stand.

I not only stand, but also place my hand over my heart when I hear our nation's anthem. And invariably, every time - and I do mean every time - when I hear the opening notes, I well up. I can't help it and I can't control it. And, oh boy, if there is a fly-over, I'm a complete hot mess.

I stand up for the belief in the American ideal. I stand up for the love of what Alexander Hamilton called "the American experiment." I stand up for the respect I have for the American spirit and for the unique sense of freedom, independent thought, courage and creativity that this country always has and fosters in her people.

I stand up for those who came before me who loved the dream of this "government of the people, by the people, for the people" and for those who paid with their blood for the privileges we have.

And I stand up out of heartfelt and tremendous respect I have for every American who ever wore the uniform of our great nation.

Are we perfect? Of course not. It took only two years after the Constitution was signed that our founding fathers passed the Bill of Rights correcting and clarifying that wonderful document. It took 76 years after that to abolish slavery, 55 years later to allow women to vote, 44 years later to pass the Civil Rights Act, and on and on. And these changes were proper and necessary, and more changes will continue, as we constantly strive to create that "City upon a Hill." They were accomplished through hard work, commitment, and having the courage to do something.

As a lawyer, I totally get it. I fully support the right to protest peacefully to affect positive change. Dr. King is an inspiration to so many of us Americans for that very reason. I stand for Dr. King's belief in the American dream.

Personally, I don't care about the NFL players. Initially, I understood that some were not respecting our anthem because of claims of police brutality, and now I understand that many are not standing, or standing arm in arm, because they do not like something that the President said about them. Like I said, I don't really care about these weekend ball players. The ones that truly care and want to meaningfully affect positive change are using their talents, time and money in their communities to do so. And I stand for them too.

I stand for the victims of the September 11 attacks, the children of Columbine and Sandy Hook, the concert goers in Las Vegas, the victims of hurricanes and storms, and for all who represent the good nature and innocents in our American society.

Protest as you will; don't stand during the anthem. I'll protect your right to protest your cause. And although it cuts me to the core and makes me sick my stomach to witness it, I'll even defend your right to burn our flag as a means of protest. But know this, I will always stand up during the anthem in respect for the soldiers whose coffins are draped with that flag, who are laid

to rest while that anthem plays, and who gave you the right to be so disrespectful, to that flag and to our anthem.

I will always proudly stand