

February 27, 2017

It is a great privilege to deliver the 125th Reading of Washington's Farewell Address.

The text was once taught in every classroom across the land as a model of citizenship - and let's hope that one day it is again.

Too often we recall him primarily as General Washington or a President Washington when the real glory of this exemplary speech and moment is Citizen Washington, as he hands back power yet again, as he did earlier when he resigned his commission at the end of the Revolution.

He wanted to return to Mount Vernon, to private life, to family and to local production for neighbors. Every American should ~~of~~ Remember that government is not the center of life; rather government is but a means to enable the real centers of life to thrive.

There are many rich lessons in this (small-r) republican text:

- * the dangers of factionalism;
- * the necessity of religious and ethical beliefs in the oaths we take;
- * the dangers of debt and excessive spending;
- * the value of trade;

* the importance of the actual
text of the Constitution;
* the blessing of a defined
amendment process;
and so on.

May we study together these
virtues of self-government again!

Ben Sasse
U.S. Senator
Nebraska

P.S. The over/under betting on how
many words I'd mispronounce
was 13 in my home.... and I
plan to tell my wife she won.