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Founder's Message: A Sad Day at Mudville

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How many students study the Declaration of Independence in school anymore? Didn't lots of Americans fight and die so we could have the freedom that the Declaration allows? I thought so. Here is a small but important quote from the Declaration of Independence written in 1776. "These rights give us the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Governments are instituted among men deriving their powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and institute new government laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness."

Hey, that's just a portion of it, but the most important. How many senators and congressmen have that framed in their offices? How many can quote it? How many of them have a clue of its meaning? The White House closed this morning (actually at 12:01 October 1st). How many days or weeks do you think the government employees will go without pay? Does the governed (that's you and me) know who pays them? Does the governed know how much their employees get paid? Does the governed know that the congressmen and senators that they voted for to go to Washington to represent them have a different health plan and a different retirement plan? Do the governed even care? Maybe if they knew about the Declaration of Independence and what it means they would care.

The late Teddy Kennedy, who was the fourth longest serving senator in history, fought for two major things that I recall (and I am sure he fought for many more). One thing he fought for was equal taxation. In other words, everyone gets taxed the same percent of every nickel made. The millionaire can't finagle any deductions because there aren't any, so he pays 10% of everything. The guy with no job also pays 10% of all his income from wherever it comes. Teddy also suggested limited terms for senators and congressmen. He was a rich kid who didn't need or want to rub elbows with lobbyists. Hooray for him.

So what's going to happen in Washington for the next few weeks, months or even years. Will we all be better because of the results? Do you and I have anything to say about it? Google CASEY AT THE BAT. That's almost as old as the Declaration. You will see why there was no joy in Mudville and maybe not a lot of joy here.

Roland Hopkins is founder of the NEREJ, Norwell, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540