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“E Pluribus Unum”— “Out of many, one.” This was our informal national motto for most of our country’s history. We see it on our coins, on the Great Seal, on our monuments, etched into the stone facades of our government buildings, and we see it in the actions we take when our country faces hardship and our communities need us. When natural disasters strike or national emergencies arise, we rise to help not just those we know, but anyone in need. We fund emergency responses, donate time and resources, and show up for neighbors near and far. That’s the Constitution in action— not just in courtrooms, but in classrooms, shelters, food banks, and voting booths.

The Founding Fathers inked the spirit of this motto into our Constitution, heralding the need for cohesiveness: “We the People, in Order to Form a More Perfect Union...” The Preamble is not a call to erase out differences, but to bind them into something stronger. Those words at the start of the Constitution remind us that America isn’t just built on laws— it’s built on the shared belief that, despite our differences, *we belong to one another*. The Constitution is a living framework that connects millions of people under one promise: that we will strive, together, for liberty, justice, and the common good.

Walt Whitman captured the heart of this American spirit when he wrote, “I am large, I contain multitudes.” He saw democracy as a chorus of different voices, each one unique but all singing toward a shared future. In his preface to *Leaves of Grass*, he called the United States “essentially the greatest poem,” written not by one author but by the people themselves. Our country *is* that poem— one that we keep writing every day, through our choices, responsibilities, and support for one another. Langston Hughes also reminded us that the Constitution’s words must match our actions, and that a true democracy depends on including everyone— especially those who’ve been left behind. Being part of this nation, this “Union” means more than enjoying freedoms— it means protecting them for others. It is echoed in Kennedy’s words to “ask not what your country can do for you— ask what you can do for your country.” It means voting not just for ourselves in our time, but for the future, paying taxes to support public needs, and standing up for justice even when it’s difficult. That’s how we continue to form a *more* perfect union—not perfect yet, realistically not *ever*, but always, *always*, striving for and moving toward it.

Out of many, we are still one. This unifying Latin phrase, uttered in Obama’s introductory speech at the Democratic National Convention, at Reagan’s Republican Farewell Address, and that transcends party lines and state lines is not just a line itself. It is the celebrated, memorialized, *indelible* promise on which this country is based. And every time we choose empathy, action, and unity, we bring our nation one step closer to fulfilling the Constitution’s promise.