Civic Engagement Essay #1: Wilson and World War I

An important theme in our course is to learn more about the many ways in which every day Americans have participated in democracy. Arguments opposed to and in favor of U.S. participation in the First World War provide an excellent historical case.

STEP ONE: Read Roark, et al. The American Promise, Chapter 22.

STEP TWO: Review the following primary historical sources:

**Voices of Americans opposed to World War I**
- [Anti-Enlistment League Poster](#)
- [His Best Customer by Winsor McCay (1917)](#)
- “I Didn’t Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier” (Cover page to sheet music, lyrics and music)
- [Eugene Debs “Canton, Ohio” Speech June 16, 1918](#)
- [Robert M. La Follette, “It Has No Popular Support” Speech to Congress April 4, 1917](#)

**Voices of Americans in favor of World War I**
- [Woodrow Wilson “Making the World Safe for Democracy” April 2, 1917](#)
- “When the Lusitania Went Down” (lyrics and music)
- “War is a Blessing Not a Curse” North American Review
- “Four Minute Men: Volunteer Speeches during World War I”
- [Women Suffragettes](#)

STEP THREE: Read [Julian Zelizer, “Erasing Woodrow Wilson’s Name is Not That Easy” CNN 2015](#)

STEP FOUR: After having read and analyzed the sources, respond to the following question:

Compare and contrast the various ways in which Americans expressed their democratic rights to voice either favor or opposition to World War I. Which attitudes prevailed, and why? How do we know? With regard to the current controversy regarding Wilson’s historical legacy, where do you stand? Should Wilson’s name be removed from institutions, such as the [Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars](#)? Regardless of your position on this debate, be sure to express your democratic right to explain why you hold it.

This assignment requires that you rely on at least three (3) primary source documents as evidence; choose evidence that reflects BOTH opposition to and support for the war. Your paper should be between 1 and 3 pages (no more than 750 words), double spaced. The paper is due to Cougar Courses before 10:00 AM on Friday, March 4. Bring a hard copy of your paper to class that day.