**Rebeca Romero Rainey Column – July 2018**

Independence Day seems just a little sweeter this year as we recognize the incredible community bank victory that just took the financial services industry, and Congress, by storm. Leave it to nearly 5,700 of the nation’s community banks to assert their independence in a way never seen before!

It’s well known that the Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act is a major achievement for the nation’s community banks. But as you know, it was a long and arduous journey to get to this point. By working together and pressing tirelessly for needed change, we will be able to better serve our customers and communities. And for community banks, that’s what it’s all about.

It’s community bankers like you who were there to push this victory over the hurdles and, eventually, over the finish line. Not once did you back down and allow yourself and your community bank to be painted with the same brush as the megabanks. Not once did you waver when ICBA asked for your letters, calls, emails, petition signatures—all in the name of tiered and proportionate regulation for our industry.

Independence from an onerous regulatory burden is now yours because of what you do for this great industry every day, what you stand for, who you serve and the difference you make to the lives you touch. It’s your sterling reputation as a trusted local lender that allowed you to have a say on Capitol Hill when others did not. Remember that and hold on to it—just as you hold on to the independence that allows you to make loans based on relationships rather than transactions, and step up to help your community in ways that only a community bank can.

It’s our honor

ICBA is proud to represent community bankers like you, who do whatever is necessary to make your community stronger and more vibrant every day. You make the American dream possible for local families, entrepreneurs, farmers and all those who depend on your community bank for their financial needs.

Just as independence matters, what you do matters. So, as we celebrate the birth of our country on July 4, I also hope you think about all the ways that being an independent community bank makes you a valuable piece of the fabric ensuring our nation’s economic wellbeing.

Never before has value been more appreciated and celebrated!