



November 21, 2016

Donald J. Trump
President-elect of the United States
Trump Tower
725 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-elect Trump:

We are writing to you on behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national advocacy organizations that, together, represent tens of millions of Americans from all walks of life. Since its founding in 1950, The Leadership Conference has played a vital role in every debate over legislation affecting civil and human rights. We are writing today on a matter of great concern to our organizations and to the nation as a whole. We strongly urge you to reconsider your appointment of Stephen K. Bannon as your chief strategist and senior counselor in the White House.

As many news sources have documented in the past week, Mr. Bannon has a history of expressing alarmingly biased and uncivil views that demean women, the LGBT community, and religious groups. And as the executive chairman of Breitbart LLC, he turned the website Breitbart.com into what he described as “the platform for the alt-right,”ⁱ a movement that includes and is heavily shaped by white supremacists, anti-Semites, anti-Muslims, nativists, and other political extremists who are more dedicated to destroying our system than they are to improving it.ⁱⁱ

Whether – as his former editor-in-chief recently speculated – Mr. Bannon is simply pandering to a radical and extremist constituency in order to increase his political influence or whether he personally holds these views,ⁱⁱⁱ it ultimately makes little difference. Either way, his presence in the White House will undermine and discredit the pledge you made last week to “be President for all Americans.” It is especially problematic at a time when many communities are facing a dramatic increase in hate crimes and other forms of racial and ethnic harassment.^{iv}

As representatives of a coalition with a long history of working with both parties in Washington, we know very well that political opponents in this town have to occasionally put strong rhetoric aside and work together to advance the public interest or to simply keep the government running. “Strange bedfellows” can accomplish truly remarkable things in Washington. Make no mistake, our organizations have been alarmed by and will strongly oppose many of your policy proposals – on the merits, and in good faith. It is our sincere hope that we can find areas where we might be able to work together to improve the lives of all Americans.

Doing so, however, requires a certain level of trust and the belief that despite our differences, we all share certain common values: that all Americans deserve a chance to live up to their potential, that our cultural diversity is a source of strength and not a weakness, and that our

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government has an important role to play in improving our lives. Mr. Bannon's record of, at best, catering to people who do not share these values will make it significantly more difficult for the communities we represent to develop trust in your administration as we move forward.

We cannot recall a previous instance in which The Leadership Conference weighed in on a presidential appointment that was not subject to the Senate confirmation process. The Bannon appointment, however, carries with it implications that go far beyond normal internal staffing matters, and will significantly affect not only your presidency but the broader interests of the American public. We strongly urge you to reconsider it.

Thank you for considering our views. If you would like to continue discussing this, please contact Wade Henderson, President and CEO of The Leadership Conference, at (202) 466-3311.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Anti-Defamation League
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian Pacific Americans Labor Alliance
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Center for Responsible Lending
Coalition on Human Needs
Council of Korean Americans
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
MALDEF
NAACP
NAACP LDF
National Action Network
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National CAPACD
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Churches
National Council of La Raza
National Urban League
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Sikh American Legal Defense & Education Fund (SALDEF)
South Asian Bar Association
South Asian Bar Association of North America
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)



United We Dream Network
YWCA USA

ⁱ Sarah Posner, “How Donald Trump’s New Campaign Chief Created an Online Haven for White Nationalists,” Mother Jones, Aug. 22, 2016 at <http://bit.ly/2g2oQgC>.

ⁱⁱ *See, e.g.*, “Alt Right: A Primer about the New White Supremacy,” Anti-Defamation League, at <http://bit.ly/2g2rfb9>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ben Shapiro, “3 Thoughts on Steve Bannon as White House ‘Chief Strategist,’” The Daily Wire, Nov. 14, 2016 at <http://bit.ly/2g2un6O>.

^{iv} *See, e.g.*, Azadeh Ansari, “FBI: Hate crimes spike, most sharply against Muslims,” CNN.com, Nov. 15, 2016, at <http://cnn.it/2g2ooPI>; Editorial, “Hateful acts are on the rise, and it’s Trump’s responsibility to take a stand,” Washington Post, Nov. 17, 2016, at <http://wpo.st/fz0F2>.