



June 5, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national advocacy organizations, and the 106 undersigned organizations, we stand united in expressing our profound concern that the civil and human rights of all Americans are being drastically undermined by your administration's proposed deep cuts to key civil rights office budgets, the withdrawal of numerous important civil and human rights policies, and the appointment of officials who appear bent on retreating from statutory civil and human rights agency priorities. We call upon your administration to reverse these disturbing trends, and to demonstrate a far greater commitment to the civil and human rights of all people in this country and to the federal laws created to protect them.

Extending equal opportunity in education, employment, housing; protecting the right to vote; reducing hate violence and racial disparities in the criminal justice system; preventing discrimination in health care; and advancing economic security are not simply legal obligations that your administration must meet. Our nation's civil and human rights laws are a testament to who we are today as a country, a sign of the tremendous progress we have made throughout our history, and a pledge we make to future generations to continue moving ever closer to our ideals of fairness and equity for all. For decades, and for compelling reasons, the vigorous enforcement of these laws has been a core federal responsibility, and should never be seen as optional or as a matter of politics.

Our concerns were recently exemplified by an article in *The Washington Post*, detailing recent steps your administration has taken to retreat from our nation's longstanding commitment to civil rights enforcement. The examples cited in that article – such as the proposed elimination of the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, the end of the environmental justice program at the Environmental Protection Agency, and threats of drastic staff cutbacks in the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights – are only the most recent signs that your administration is engaged in a significant rollback of civil rights enforcement. They build upon a record that already borders on the unconscionable, which includes a discriminatory Muslim ban, limits on the use of consent decrees to reform troubled police departments, the revival of a failed war on drugs, support of an intentionally racially discriminatory voter ID law, the formation

Officers

Chair

Judith L. Lichtman
National Partnership for
Women & Families

Vice Chairs

Jacqueline Pata
National Congress of American Indians
Thomas A. Saenz
Mexican American Legal
Defense and Educational Fund
Hillary Shelton
NAACP

Secretary

Jo Ann Jenkins
AARP

Treasurer

Lee A. Saunders
American Federation of State,
County & Municipal Employees

Board of Directors

Helena Berger
American Association of
People with Disabilities
Cornell William Brooks
NAACP
Kristen Clarke
Lawyers' Committee for
Civil Rights Under Law
Lily Eskelsen Garcia
National Education Association
Marcia D. Greenberger
National Women's Law Center
Chad Griffin
Human Rights Campaign
Wylecia Wiggs Harris
League of Women Voters of the
United States
Mary Kay Henry
Service Employees International Union
Mark Hopkins
AAUW
Sherrilyn Ifill
NAACP Legal Defense and
Educational Fund, Inc.
Michael B. Keegan
People for the American Way
Samer E. Khalaf
American-Arab
Anti-Discrimination Committee
Marc Morial
National Urban League
Janet Murguía
National Council of La Raza
Debra L. Ness
National Partnership for
Women & Families
Stephanie Nitahara
Japanese American Citizens League
Terry O'Neill
National Organization for Women
Rabbi Jonah Pesner
Religious Action Center
Of Reform Judaism
Anthony Romero
American Civil Liberties Union
Shanna Smith
National Fair Housing Alliance
Richard L. Trumka
AFL-CIO
Randi Weingarten
American Federation of Teachers
Dennis Williams
International Union, UAW
John C. Yang
Asian Americans Advancing Justice |
AAJC

Policy and Enforcement

Committee Chair

Michael Lieberman
Anti-Defamation League
President & CEO
Vanita Gupta

of an illegitimate “election integrity” task force to attempt to justify voter suppression efforts, increased prosecutions and mass deportation of undocumented immigrants, proposed defunding of Planned Parenthood, the signing of an executive order that endorses discrimination under the guise of religious liberty, freezes on affirmative litigation, and the rollback of guidance clarifying protections for transgender students.

We were stunned to hear a White House spokesperson claim, in the *Post* article, that your administration “has an unwavering commitment to the civil rights of all Americans.” Your administration’s actions to date demonstrate the opposite. We urge you to reverse course, before more individuals and communities are harmed, by resolving to take the following steps:

- Enforce the law. Federal agencies must vigorously respond to complaints of civil and human rights violations, and must uphold the vital federal role of enforcing our civil and human rights laws and ensuring vulnerable communities are protected from discrimination.
- Preserve existing policies. In recent years, federal civil rights offices have issued numerous policies and procedures to clarify the obligations of affected individuals, employers, and governmental entities under federal civil and human rights laws. These must be maintained.
- Nominate and appoint qualified individuals. We urge you to ensure that individuals chosen to lead civil rights offices have a demonstrated record of support for federal civil rights laws and marginalized communities. Individuals who are unfamiliar with or hostile to our nation’s civil rights laws and their purpose have no place leading offices charged with protecting people from discrimination.
- Prioritize data collection. A key component of civil rights enforcement, in many agencies, is continuing to collect, and make available to the public, disaggregated data to determine existing patterns and to promote better future compliance with federal hate crime and nondiscrimination laws.
- Condemn bigotry and violence. Law enforcement agencies and community-based organizations have documented a significant increase in bigotry and hate crimes. We urge you to establish a White House hate crime task force to coordinate federal agency response. You and all members of your administration should use your bully pulpit to clearly condemn bias-motivated violence and bigotry targeting people based on race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability at every opportunity.

Our vision of an America as good in practice as it is in promise is fundamentally undermined by your administration’s apparent agenda of nothing less than an all-out, systemic assault on the progress our country has made since the New Deal. Our nation should honor equal protection for all, view its diversity as its strength, and strive to be an inclusive place where all in America can live, work, study, and participate in our democracy as free and equal people. We call on you and your administration to take affirmative steps to halt the problematic policies and initiatives we



have outlined, and to provide positive leadership on these issues in order to promote inclusion and respect for the basic rights and dignity of every person in America.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
9to5, National Association of Working Women
A. Philip Randolph Institute
American Association for Access, Equity and Diversity
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Baptist Home Mission Societies
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Unions (AFL-CIO)s
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
American Federation of Teachers
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Americans for Financial Reform
Amnesty International USA
The Andrew Goodman Foundation
Anti-Defamation League
The Arc of the United States
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
Augustus F. Hawkins Foundation
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Brennan Center for Justice
Center for American Progress
Center for Community Change Action
The Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Responsible Lending
Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism-California State University, San Bernardino
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Equal Justice Society
Equality Federation
Family Equality Council
Feminist Majority
FreeState Justice

GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)
GLSEN
Human Rights Campaign
Human Rights First
interact
Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Interfaith Alliance
International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies
Justice in Aging
Lambda Legal
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of United Latin American Citizens
League of Women Voters of the United States
Legal Aid at Work
MALDEF
Matthew Shepard Foundation
Muslim Advocates
NAACP
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)
National Association of Social Workers
National Bar Association
National Black Justice Coalition
National CAPACD
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Center for Youth Law
National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty
National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of La Raza
The National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network
National Education Association
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Immigration Law Center

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National LGBTQ Task Force
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
OutServe-SLDN
People For the American Way
PFLAG
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
PolicyLink
Poverty & Race Research Action Council
SALDEF
SEARAC
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
The Sikh Coalition
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
Southern Poverty Law Center
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
Whitman-Walker Health
Women of Reform Judaism
YWCA USA