



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 104 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

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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 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  
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