



**CALIFORNIA STATE
CONFERENCE OF THE
N A A C P**

1215 K Street, Suite 1609, Sacramento, CA 95814

Alice A. Huffman, President

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 18, 2017

California NAACP Responds to Charlottesville Rally and President Trump's Latest Remarks

As the civil rights leader for the California Hawaii State Conference of the NAACP and a National Board Member, I am compelled to speak out on the events of the last week occurring in Charlottesville. First, our hearts go out to the family of Heather Heyer, the two law enforcement agents who needlessly died and the activists who were wounded and hospitalized from the acts of terrorism in the Charlottesville melee. Secondly, we give tribute to the elected officials of Charlottesville and Virginia who courageously decided to remove the painful racist statutes of Robert E. Lee, which constantly reminded African Americans of slavery. Those statues also served as a symbol to most Americans that he was treasonous who worked to secede from the union and opposed the values of inclusion in this country.

President Trump signaled to us during his unethical campaign that he had not only a deep disregard for African Americans, but also for women, immigrants, Latinos and other minority groups. He further reinforced this when he hired Steve Bannon, denied knowing David Duke and led the birther campaign against President Barack Obama. We feared that if he won, we could be in for a social justice roll back. While the struggle for justice continues, we have achieved significant accomplishments during the civil rights movement that landed government on our side; i.e. Brown vs. Board of Education, the Civil Rights Acts, the right to vote, and laws that outlawed legal discrimination. We endured the personal insults and slander because we knew our government laws would protect us from deeper hostile actions. Thus, we trusted government to be the mediator and regulator and protector of our Civil Rights allowing the haves and have-nots to coexist in this great land. We must work on all sides to continue civil and equal rights progress. To that end we have learned to build coalitions and to support each other in areas of social justice and civil rights to achieve the greater good.

But now as a leader and a senior African American woman activist, I know that what we feared during the campaign has come home to roost. We do not have a president for all Americans. Yes, he was elected by mostly White Americans and Barack Obama was elected in large part by a strong turnout of African Americans, but we hoped that Trump would do what President Obama did. We hoped that he would work to represent all of us and become "our" president. But now the Emperor has no clothes. His nakedness started with his egregious appointments - beginning with Betsy DeVos, who intends to demolish public education, his efforts to reduce health funding for many Americans who have benefitted from the Affordable Care Act, the derogatory comments about immigrants, his debasing behavior toward women, and his latest effort to take transgender people out of the military. Now, President Trump has alerted the entire world that he does not uphold the values that our great Constitution is built upon. The government laws of inclusion that we won through peaceful protest, despite hoses, dog bites, riots and lynching are not honored by President Trump.

As one who majored in social cultural anthropology, I may have developed more tolerance for racism and bigotry because I believe we make racial progress in this country through fair and equitable laws, government contracts and personal contacts. I have seen change up close. But I fear we are sliding back.

Where do we go from here? Lucky for us we reside on the West Coast where most of our major cities and states are sanctuary. But we don't live on an island. "Make America Great Again" is a euphemism for "white again". We must come together as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. did, with peaceful protest, and work to weed President Trump's out before he destroys American. We must call on Congress, good Republicans and good Democrats, to work together to form a super majority and make his presidency irrelevant.

We know that the progress of our movement means that Jews, Gentiles, Muslims, African Americans, Whites, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, gays and all who believe in the values of America, one that is just and free will band together for freedom, justice and equality, and hold the course steady for justice.

President Trump's moral authority is bankrupt. Your NAACP will not wane or grow weary. We will remain immovable and steadfast.

###

Founded in 1909, the NAACP - the nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. It's more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, conducting voter mobilization and monitoring equal opportunity in the public and private sectors.