

Open Letter to President-elect Donald J. Trump from Jewish American Organizations

November 18, 2016

Dear President-elect Trump,

We write on behalf of organizations representing hundreds of thousands of Jewish Americans deeply committed to the values that underpin our people's faith, our country's democracy and our relationship with the people and state of Israel. We wish to raise several serious concerns based on issues and events from the recent campaign.

For centuries, Jews have lived as minorities in the lands of other people. As Americans, we recognize how blessed we are to live in a land that respects religious liberty and works to guarantee freedom and opportunity for all. As Jews, we have been proud to help lead our nation's steady march to fulfill its founding promise that all people are created equal—a promise that echoes the biblical assertion that all human beings are equal creations in the divine image. We have played, and continue to play, a vital role in the process of perfecting our still-imperfect laws that guarantee life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all.

Based on our community's experience, we begin by strongly condemning the many instances of anti-Semitism – both subtle and overt – that appeared around your Presidential campaign. We have been deeply concerned by words and actions during the campaign that attacked and offended Americans on the basis of their gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. Expressions of xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism, misogyny and other forms of prejudice, in and around your campaign, threatened to undermine our nation's core values and to erode our people's shared sense of what it means to be an American.

As President, we expect that you will make it absolutely clear that you emphatically reject anti-Semitism in all forms, and that you are committed to ensuring the religious freedom that is at the heart of America's identity. Further, we call on you to forcefully and consistently reiterate our nation's commitment to respect the rights of all citizens and to fight discrimination in all of its ugly and un-American forms. All American citizens have the right to expect no less from our nation's highest elected leader.

Like you, American Jews are the descendants of immigrants. We believe that immigration and successful integration of newcomers into the fabric of American society has been key to our country's strength and prosperity. Because many of our families arrived in this country as refugees fleeing persecution—and because so many died when the borders closed, we are committed to defending our country's identity as a land of refuge.

As such, we will not support efforts to limit or foreclose access to this great country on the basis of a person's religious faith or country of origin. We also oppose efforts to punish those who have made and continue to make great contributions to our society, but who are here without the required documentation, often because of the near impossibility of securing a legal visa.

Finally, as Jewish Americans, we are committed to our country maintaining a strong relationship with the State of Israel – one that must be grounded in our shared values and shared interests. We, and an overwhelming majority of Jewish Americans, support a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and an active role for the United States in achieving this vision. We expect the State of Israel to embody democratic principles, as enshrined by its Declaration of Independence and an active role for the United States in efforts to defend those principles.

We cannot support an abandonment of America's fundamental policies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – which have been recognized as vital to American national interest and supported by Presidents of both parties for 50 years. We therefore have been alarmed by changes in the Republican Platform, as well as statements by your key advisors on Israel, which eliminate the goals of the two-state solution and creation of a Palestinian state living at peace with Israel.

As you prepare to take office, we call on you to commit to be a President for all Americans – including those who did not support you.

We call on you to be a President who protects all Americans, including and especially those in more vulnerable communities who, based on the tenor of the campaign we've just experienced and the upsurge in hate crimes, are increasingly afraid for themselves, their families and their children.

We call on you to protect the great traditions of our country that have been a beacon to “the huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

And we call on you to staff your administration with individuals who exhibit excellence and empathy, and a commitment to protecting the security, honor and dignity of all American regardless of religion, race, gender, ethnicity, disability, or sexual orientation. Your recent decision to appoint Stephen Bannon to the post of Senior Counselor and Strategist in the White House runs counter to these principles and should be rescinded for the sake of the American people and the honor of the government of the United States.

As you begin your term we are certain that you will find willing partners in the Jewish community to join with your administration if it follows a path that upholds and defends the principles of fairness, justice and freedom on which this country was built.

But, we will not stand idly by if you choose to take actions that violate human rights, or that reverse the progress we have made at home and abroad. You will find us as powerful opponents of any effort to undermine these gains.

With hope for cooperative activity to promote peace, justice, equality, we are sincerely,

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CEO



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Jewish Labor Committee
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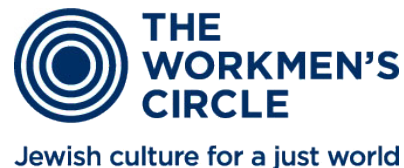
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