

November 30, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Addressing the increase in hate crimes since the 2016 presidential election

Dear Senator McConnell, Senator Reid, Representative Ryan, and Representative Pelosi:

On behalf of national diverse bar associations, including the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL), the National Bar Association (NBA), the National LGBT Bar Association (National LGBT Bar) and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA), we urge you to take action to address the increase in hate crime incidents across the country since the 2016 presidential election. We urge you and your colleagues to publicly denounce these incidents and to join us in providing support to victims and communities affected by this bias-motivated harassment.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has reported that there have been almost 900 reports of hate crimes across the country since November 8. They note that anti-immigrant incidents remain the most common type of harassment documented. Approximately 40 percent of these incidents occurred in educational settings. And the data shows the troubling trend of rising incidents of anti-Muslim hate, recently identified by the FBI, continues.

Our associations, who represent the interests of over 200,000 diverse attorneys, include within our respective missions the goal to eradicate discrimination, to advocate for issues of importance to our communities, and to address violations of individual rights. Harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or religion will not be

tolerated and our membership will continue to stand up and help protect all in our country. We strongly condemn these incidents and all instances of hate-inspired intimidation and violence. In addition, our associations stand ready to provide assistance and guidance to all victims of these incidents. To that end, our coalition will be distributing a [hate crimes toolkit](#) to our individual members with links to information about how to report hate incidents, support community-based organizations, offer pro bono assistance, and coordinate with government agencies. We encourage you to join us in this effort to condemn these acts and serve affected communities.

Words matter. When anyone speaks hatefully about specific groups, be they African Americans, Hispanics, Muslims, or immigrants generally, it encourages others to do so as well. And this language, particularly if our leaders remain silent in the face of it, can encourage acts of harassment and physical violence. We encourage you to actively and publicly denounce the use of this language and be role models on inclusive discourse to help our country heal and move forward.

We call on our fellow Americans, law enforcement, our government leadership, and the media to become more proactive, to reach out, educate and help create a deeper level of support, understanding and respect for all Americans. We urge you, the bipartisan leaders of our nation's bicameral legislative body, to play an important role in reassuring the American people that each one of them deserves and will receive equal protection under the law.

Sincerely,



Pedro Torres-Diaz
President
Hispanic National Bar Association



Kevin Judd
President
National Bar Association



Cyndie M. Chang
President
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association



Eduardo Juarez
President
National LGBT Bar Association



Leslie Richards-Yellen
President
National Association of Women Lawyers



Jennifer Weddle
President
National Native American Bar Association