

Statement By Major Christian Organizations on President-Elect Trump's Policy Agenda and Political Appointments

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 6, 2017—As our nation prepares for the Presidential Inauguration, we do so with the lasting residue of a divisive election season and an even more fractured past. Our faith teaches us to be ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:11-21). That is why we urge President-Elect Donald Trump, who has said he shares our Christian faith, to take seriously his responsibility to bring our nation together and to heed the oath he will take to preserve, protect and defend America. He can start this work before the oath of office is taken with his policy agenda and political appointments.

Together, we represent millions of Christians in the U.S. who believe in the power and possibility of healing and unity for our nation. We have grave concerns about a proposed policy agenda that, if enacted, would put the most vulnerable among us in jeopardy. Throughout Christian scriptures, we are instructed to care for the poor and the most vulnerable. The Affordable Care Act, including Medicaid expansion, has given more than 30 million people access to affordable health coverage. While working to improve the ACA will benefit all Americans, repealing it without simultaneously offering a replacement is reckless and unnecessarily endangers the health of millions of people. This is certainly no way to make America great.

Safety net programs, which lift more than 40 million people out of poverty each year, must also be preserved. These programs are proven to help reduce poverty and provide families in need, especially children, and seniors, with food and housing security as well as with access to health care. Programs like Medicaid/Medicare, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/food stamps and Child Nutrition and WIC, all provide much-needed help to families when they are struggling to make ends meet. For Congress to block, grant, cut or merge these programs will have devastating impacts on low-income families. In fact, it will increase the number of people living in poverty, just as statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau show that poverty numbers are declining.

In addition, we are deeply troubled by choices President-Elect Trump has made for his Cabinet, particularly for Chief Strategist, Attorney General, and National Security Advisor. Stephen Bannon, Jefferson Beauregard Sessions and Michael Flynn epitomize extremist, racist and fringe world views that we believe are morally inconsistent with Christian principles of loving neighbor and antithetical to American values of “liberty and justice *for all*.”

These objectionable nominees represent a bygone era of hatred that we have denounced and worked tirelessly to eradicate. Their corrupted credentials, which include condoning and supporting racist, anti-Semitic, white supremacist, xenophobic, and anti-Muslim ideologies, are not only unacceptable but they should disqualify them for service as public officials. We urge the President-Elect to protect the integrity of our nation by replacing these nominees with candidates who represent shared American values for the common good.

Before he takes the oath of office, we call on President-Elect Trump to preserve, protect and defend our nation by enacting a policy agenda that will improve the lives of the most vulnerable, not put them at greater risk. We urge President-Elect Trump to preserve, protect and defend our nation against people who have a documented history of racial hatred, bigotry, and xenophobia. We encourage President-Elect Trump to preserve, protect and defend our nation by doing the hard work it will take to unify our country and move us toward a just, sustainable and equitable future that lives up to the ideals and promise of America.

Signed,

Conference of National Black Churches
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative
The National Council of Churches of the Churches of Christ in the USA
Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference