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February 12, 2018

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20050

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, I write today to express our complete disgust with your unreasonable immigration proposal, particularly your insistence upon the elimination of the Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) Program. Your framework explicitly pits Dreamers, young Americans who know no other country, against the legal immigration system, one which provides an opportunity for immigrants of color to fight for a chance at the American Dream. Sadly, your strategy was predictable in light of your long, troubled history with race in this country. We vehemently oppose your blatantly callous strategy to divide and conquer communities of color and call on Members of Congress to reject your proposal, lest they be complicit in advancing your racially discriminatory policies.

As you may or may not know, the DV Program creates a pathway to the American Dream for about 50,000 people each year hailing from countries that send relatively few immigrants to the United States. The largest number of diversity visas are given to people from African and Asian countries, so ending this program would disproportionately harm these immigrants. It is not at all lost on us that the DV Program enjoyed bipartisan support upon its inception, when it largely benefited Irish immigrants, but must be ended now that it largely benefits immigrants of color.

Moreover, your calls to end this program lack any reasonable basis. First, you portray the program as a giveaway to immigrants randomly selected by a lottery. While a lottery system is used to administer this extremely over-subscribed visa program in an unbiased fashion, applicants nonetheless undergo a rigorous vetting process and extensive screening. Second, you claim the program is a threat to national security because it creates a pathway for terrorists and criminals. The very nature of the diversity visa lottery is an ineffective tool for terrorists. In 2015, 9.4 million people applied for 50,000 visas. Even if a terrorist beat the 1 in 188 odds of being selected for the program, that person would still have to complete the normal vetting process for any other green card holder. Additionally, diversity visa recipients have a far lower rate of incarceration

compared to native-born Americans. For example, in 2015, immigrants from the top 20 diversity visa countries had an incarceration rate just one-fifth of the incarceration rate of native-born Americans. Lastly, you continuously characterize diversity visa recipients as low-skilled workers with little to contribute to American society. While America should continue to welcome the tired, poor, huddled masses yearning to breathe free, your characterization of diversity visa recipients is simply false. Applicants are already required to have a high school education or equivalent work experience. Moreover, diversity visa recipients have been generally better educated than Americans born in the United States. For example, in 2016, half of diversity visa recipients had a college degree, compared to just 32 percent of the overall United States population.

To be clear, the crisis we face is one of your own making. Dreamers enjoyed legal status under the Obama-era policy of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which you unilaterally ended last fall. Now, despite your commitment to sign the Dream Act into law if accompanied by border security measures, you continue to thwart bipartisan efforts to find a solution for Dreamers by attacking the legal immigration system. To suggest that we are any less committed to a permanent solution for Dreamers because we refuse to acquiesce to your racially discriminatory policies is preposterous. We refuse to choose between Dreamers and African immigrants. They both have and deserve our full-throated support.

As the Conscience of the Congress, we have an obligation to call your positions exactly how we see them: un-American, unpatriotic, and immoral. America is, by its very nature, a beautiful patchwork of immigrants of all races, nationalities, and religions. Indeed, this country and its wealth was built on the backs of African slaves brought here against their will and forced to toil for centuries under despicable bondage and domestic terrorism through slavery, Black Codes, Jim Crow, and every other backlash to the marginal advancement of African Americans in this country. Ending the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program will undoubtedly diminish the future flow of African immigrants and further marginalize those who depend on the program for a shot at the American Dream. Instead of forcing a false choice between Dreamers and African immigrants, we call on you to abandon your baseless campaign to end the DV Program and commit yourself to a solution for Dreamers, which 90 percent of Americans support.

Sincerely,



Cedric Richmond  
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

CC: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer  
House Speaker Paul Ryan  
House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi