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September 27, 2017

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

Dear President Trump:

I write today to express my utter disgust with your handling of race relations in America in general and, more specifically, your calculated, divisive response to nationwide demonstrations against police brutality and racial injustice by professional football players, owners, coaches, and countless other patriots. African Americans are just as patriotic as any other American. We have fought in every war from the American Revolution to Iraq and Afghanistan, only to come home to a country that has yet to reconcile deep-seated issues of race, inequality, and injustice.


As President of the United States, your use of profane, sexually derogatory language in addressing American citizens, or anyone for that matter, is unbecoming of the office you now hold. Moreover, your complete lack of understanding of or empathy for the very painful history and substantive policy concerns that move people like Colin Kaepernick to take a stand, or a knee, in the first place is a reminder of all the African American community has to lose under your Administration. Nonetheless, as Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), an organization with the well-deserved reputation as the Conscience of the Congress, I feel obligated to yet again attempt to educate you and your Administration about the many problems facing our communities and how you can work with us to improve them.

As you may recall, I, along with senior leadership within the CBC, met with you on March 22, 2017. In that meeting, we presented you with a 125-page policy book, as well as a letter addressed to Attorney General Jeff Sessions from Judiciary Committee Ranking Member John Conyers, the Dean of the House, and myself. Both the policy book and the letter to Attorney General Sessions provided much-needed insight into our legitimate concerns with the criminal justice system, racial profiling, and police brutality, among many other issues. Not only did you and Attorney General Sessions fail to respond to either document in any substantive way, your actions continue to suggest that our pleas for responsible policy solutions were completely disregarded.

For example, Attorney General Sessions has initiated a second failed war on drugs that will wreck the Black community, an over-policed population, and only exacerbate our nation's shameful mass incarceration problem. The painful irony that Black drug users are treated as criminals while White opioid addicts receive a multi-million-dollar federal public health response is not lost on me or the millions of African Americans that CBC Members represent. You personally add insult to injury with the racist dog whistles you employ, such as calling for "law and order" in underserved, neglected communities across America while concurrently encouraging police brutality. The actions taken by you and your Administration in the short time you have been in office have already caused serious harm to our constituents and the vulnerable communities for whom we speak.

When we met, you claimed you cared for our communities. At the time, we provided you with several solutions that you could have discussed with us in order to prove that you were not just blowing smoke. Since our meeting, you have done nothing to help our communities and have taken affirmative actions that have harmed our communities. Almost everything you have done and said on the topic of race or on issues that implicate race demonstrate a shocking lack of knowledge for an adult public official in the 21st century. In hopes that the United States President would act with knowledge on these important issues, I have enclosed a copy of both the policy book, the letter to Attorney General Sessions, and a letter to Education Secretary DeVos that we provided you six months ago. I urge you to read these documents, since it is evident that you have not, and give serious thought to addressing the underlying concerns that give rise to the demonstrations you find so very disgraceful.

Sincerely,



Cedric Richmond
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

Enclosure

CC: Attorney General Jefferson Sessions
Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson
Education Secretary Betsy DeVos