



THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

August 18, 2017

Dear Mr. President:

Melania Trump
Honorary Chairman

John Abodeely
Acting Executive Director

Paula Boggs
Richard J. Cohen
Chuck Close
Fred Goldring
Howard L. Gottlieb
Vicki Kennedy
Jhumpa Lahiri
Anne Luzzatto
Thom Mayne
Kalpen Modi
Eric Ortner
Ken Solomon
Caroline Taylor
Jill Cooper Udall
Andrew Weinstein
George C. Wolfe
John Lloyd Young

Ex Officio:
Carla Hayden, Librarian
Library of Congress
John Parrish Peede,
Acting Chairman
National Endowment for the Humanities
Jane Chu, *Chairman*
National Endowment for the Arts
David M. Rubenstein,
Chairman
Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Kathryn Matthew, *Director*
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Ryan Zinke, *Secretary*
U.S. Department of the Interior
Betsy DeVos, *Secretary*
U.S. Department of Education
Tim Horne, *Administrator*
U.S. General Services Administration
Rex Tillerson, *Secretary*
U.S. Department of State
Earl A. Powell, III,
Director
National Gallery of Art
David Skorton, *Secretary*
Smithsonian Institution
Steven Mnuchin, *Secretary*
U.S. Department of the Treasury

Reproach and censure in the strongest possible terms are necessary following your support of the hate groups and terrorists who killed and injured fellow Americans in Charlottesville. The false equivalencies you push cannot stand. The Administration's refusal to quickly and unequivocally condemn the cancer of hatred only further emboldens those who wish America ill. We cannot sit idly by, the way that your West Wing advisors have, without speaking out against your words and actions. We are members of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). The Committee was created in 1982 under President Reagan to advise the White House on cultural issues. We were hopeful that continuing to serve in the PCAH would allow us to focus on the important work the committee does with your federal partners and the private sector to address, initiate, and support key policies and programs in the arts and humanities for all Americans. Effective immediately, please accept our resignation from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Elevating any group that threatens and discriminates on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, disability, orientation, background, or identity is un-American. We have fought slavery, segregation, and internment. We must learn from our rich and often painful history. The unified fabric of America is made by patriotic individuals from backgrounds as vast as the nation is strong. In our service to the American people, we have experienced this first-hand as we traveled and built the Turnaround Arts education program, now in many urban and rural schools across the country from Florida to Wisconsin.

Speaking truth to power is never easy, Mr. President. But it is our role as commissioners on the PCAH to do so. Art is about inclusion. The Humanities include a vibrant free press. You have attacked both. You released a budget which eliminates arts and culture agencies. You have threatened nuclear war while gutting diplomacy funding. The Administration pulled out of the Paris agreement, filed an amicus brief undermining the Civil Rights Act, and attacked our brave trans service members. You have subverted equal protections, and are committed to banning Muslims and refugee women & children from our great country. This does not unify the nation we all love. We know the importance of open and free dialogue through our work in the cultural diplomacy realm, most recently with the first-ever US Government arts and culture delegation to Cuba, a country without the same First Amendment protections we enjoy here. Your words and actions push us all further away from the freedoms we are guaranteed.

Ignoring your hateful rhetoric would have made us complicit in your words and actions. We took a patriotic oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Supremacy, discrimination, and vitriol are not American values. Your values are not American values. We must be better than this. We are better than this. If this is not clear to you, then we call on you to resign your office, too.

Thank you,

| | | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Paula Boggs | Chuck Close | Richard Cohen | Fred Goldring | Howard L. Gottlieb |
| Vicki Kennedy | Jhumpa Lahiri | Anne Luzzatto | Thom Mayne | Kalpen Modi (Kal Penn) |
| Eric Ortner | Ken Solomon | Caroline Taylor | Jill Cooper Udall | |
| Andrew Weinstein | | John Lloyd Young | | |