

Why welcoming cannot thrive as long as racism persists

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Being welcoming is more than being tolerant—it's having a true respect and appreciation for our neighbors and making sure that, in our culture and in our policies, everyone belongs. Unfortunately, the recent events in Louisville, KY, Minneapolis, MN, and Brunswick, GA show that we still have a long way to go to being a truly welcoming America.

We cannot be welcoming when African Americans are repeatedly targeted because of the color of their skin.

We cannot be welcoming when violence against our neighbors is minimized or ignored.

We cannot be welcoming if we are afraid to address the root causes of racism.

The pandemic has amplified the problems of inequality in our society. No one can escape the risks of catching the virus, and yet, African Americans, minorities, and immigrants have been disproportionately affected by it. We must go beyond these momentary crises and commit to changing these systemic issues from the inside out. Who we elect, the policies we support, the words we speak—these are things we as individuals can control and must use to bring lasting change.

We stand with our African American friends and neighbors in calling for justice and true accountability. We also call for a new normal, one where every person—regardless of their race, gender, or creed—is treated equally under the law and able to live safely in their communities without fear. When the shadow of terror hangs over us and our neighbors, this is not freedom; it is oppression, and it affects all of us. Conversely, when each person in a community feels they belong, everyone benefits. Each of us is empowered to be that change and obligated to make the problems of racism and injustice our own if we want to achieve a welcoming America.

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