

## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11<sup>th</sup>

We the undersigned are a diverse group of religious, racial, ethnic, and civil and human rights organizations that have joined together in solemn remembrance of the victims of 9/11. We honor their memory on this 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, by rededicating ourselves to core principles as set forth in this statement that reaffirm our unity of purpose as a nation, the resilience of our democracy, and our respect for fundamental freedoms.

Much attention has been paid to divisions among groups and political fault lines in the public debate. For our coalition, this anniversary is an occasion to recall as well that in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, across the nation, we experienced numerous expressions of unity, empathy and a renewed faith in each other as many of us joined together in solidarity and to help one another.

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> were transformative in many ways. They shook America's sense of security and brought home to every person the danger of extremist violence and the reality of our vulnerability. In the decade since 9/11, two administrations, the Congress, and countless state and local leaders have devoted considerable attention to domestic security challenges. The debate over how we as a country should best cope with ongoing threats is dynamic and ongoing.

Effective counterterrorism is important to everyone, but policies that divide communities, inflame fear and violate human rights undermine our nation's core values and our security. Some counterterrorism measures have resulted in insufficient adherence to constitutional protections and violations of human rights. Moreover, debates on issues such as border security have often fanned public fear and contributed to an atmosphere that fostered distrust, racial profiling and even hate violence. Too often, even well-intentioned public officials have exacerbated fears and misunderstandings. Indeed, some government policies enacted in haste after 9/11 have had discriminatory effects and singled out entire groups as targets of suspicion. This has left some in our communities feeling vulnerable and unsafe in their homes, at their workplaces, at religious gatherings, and in public spaces. This has been the case especially for immigrants, Muslims, Sikhs, South Asians, and Arabs.

Left unaddressed, these conditions threaten to undermine efforts to promote safety and security. We know from experience that America's historic commitment to civil and human rights is not an impediment to public safety but rather offers a more enduring and effective approach by ensuring that all communities are not alienated or scapegoated.

This anniversary is also a moment to reflect on the importance of maintaining America's standing as a global leader. The U.S. speaks proudly to other countries about the need to protect human rights while fulfilling the duty of a government to protect the security of its people.

Our decades of experience as a coalition fighting hate crimes have shown the power of diverse groups working together and partnering with law enforcement to shape effective responses. These efforts have required public-private partnerships to challenge bias, prejudice and profiling based on race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion and disability. We anticipate building on that experience to bring together groups and political and civic leadership to advance our common goal to build secure and inclusive communities that reflect our nation's values and its diversity.

**We pledge to:**

- Use this anniversary as an occasion to recall our shared commitment and shared sacrifice to ensure that American policies remain consistent with our highest ideals.
- Work in solidarity to uphold our common American values such as respect for diversity, fairness, and tolerance, and our commitment to protect fundamental freedoms and basic human rights as well as our need for safety and security.
- Join together in support of policies that promote inclusion and respect for basic rights of every person in America.
- Encourage individuals to participate in a respectful public discourse that will foster reasoned and constructive policymaking.
- Advance a more constructive public discourse and policy environment in which the policy recommendations of so many of our organizations – ranging from accountability for torture to ending indefinite detention to immigration reform – can be considered as part of a sober, reasoned, evidence-based discussion.
- Stand by each other, as we did in the days following 9/11, and throughout the last decade, to build and sustain durable partnerships to ensure that no one in our communities is singled out or demonized in this debate.
- We call on political leaders and public officials to provide positive political and civic leadership to meet the challenge of ensuring the safety and security of every person in America while preserving the freedom and human dignity that is the bedrock of American democracy. This includes:
  - Recognizing the critical importance of combating terrorism without casting blame or suspicion or alienating any particular community;
  - Supporting policies that promote resilience of our civil and legal institutions as well as inclusion and respect for basic rights of all individuals;
  - Engaging in a policy discourse based on evidence and facts rather than one based on overheated rhetoric or the manipulation of fear and racial or ethnic stereotyping;
  - Strengthening institutions and mechanisms that safeguard civil and human rights;
  - Promoting greater partnerships between communities and law enforcement to prevent and fight extremist violence while challenging bias and rejecting racial profiling;
  - Protecting and promoting religious freedom rights, enforcing existing civil rights laws, and ensuring comprehensive federal and state hate crime data collection efforts;
  - Using their bully pulpit to speak out in response to terrorist acts and bias-motivated incidents to affirm unity, condemn bigotry, and calm fears.

## **Supporting Organizations**

[Alliance for Justice](#)

[American Association of Persons with Disabilities](#)

[American Civil Liberties Union](#)

[American Federation of Government Employees, Women's & Fair Practices Departments](#)

[American Islamic Congress](#)

[American Jewish Committee](#)

[American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee](#)

[Anti-Defamation League](#)

[ASIAN AMERICAN JUSTICE CENTER Member of Asian](#)

[American Center for Advancing Justice](#)

[Asian Law Caucus, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice](#)

[Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance Education Fund](#)

[Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Member of Asian American Center for Advancing Justice](#)

[Bill of Rights Defense Committee](#)  
[Brennan Center for Justice](#)  
[Center for National Security Studies](#)  
[Common Cause](#)  
[DC Vote](#)  
[Demos](#)  
[Equal Justice Society](#)  
[Friends Committee on National Legislation](#)  
[Hip Hop Caucus](#)  
[Human Rights Campaign](#)  
[Human Rights First](#)  
[Islamic Society of North America](#)  
[Japanese American Citizens League](#)  
[Jewish Council for Public Affairs](#)  
[Jewish Labor Committee](#)  
[Jewish Women International](#)  
[Just Detention International](#)  
[Lambda Legal](#)  
[Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law](#)  
[Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#)  
[Legal Momentum](#)  
[Muslim Advocates](#)  
[Muslim Public Affairs Council](#)  
[NAACP](#)  
[NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.](#)  
[National Assoc for Equal Opportunity in Higher Ed](#)  
[National Association of Human Rights Workers](#)  
[National Association of Social Workers](#)  
[National Black Justice Coalition](#)  
[National Center for Transgender Equality](#)  
[National Coalition on Black Civic Participation](#)  
[National Congress of American Indians](#)  
[National Council of La Raza](#)  
[National Council on Independent Living](#)  
[National Fair Housing Alliance](#)  
[National Gay and Lesbian Task Force](#)  
[National Hispanic Media Coalition](#)  
[National Immigration Forum](#)  
[National Immigration Law Center](#)  
[National Korean American Service and Education Consortium](#)  
[National Organization for Women](#)  
[National Partnership for Women & Families](#)  
[Open Society Foundations](#)  
[Opportunity Agenda](#)  
[PFLAG National](#)  
[People for the American Way](#)  
[Pride at Work](#)  
[Public Advocates Inc.](#)  
[Rights Working Group](#)  
[September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows](#)  
[Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#)

[Sikh Coalition](#)

[South Asian Americans Leading Together](#)

[Southern Poverty Law Center](#)

[TransAfrica](#)

[Union for Reform Judaism](#)

[UNITED SIKHS](#)

[United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society](#)