

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

— Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail.

The struggle for civil rights involves a quest to embody the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence, that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” When one person’s right does not have the same worth as another’s, it lessens the worth of all rights and the inherent dignity of each person.

We live in perilous times when those who seek to uphold rights are equated with those who fight to restrict rights.

We live in perilous times when we seek to ban any person from the military who is willing to put his or her life on the line to protect our country – gay, straight, or transgendered

We live in perilous times when our President pardons a law enforcement official who is found in contempt for violating the Bill of Rights for assaulting immigrants, all while contemplating deporting over 800,000 Dreamers

We live in perilous times when Congress is actively seeking how to restrict the rights, healthcare, and independence of persons with disabilities.

We live in perilous times when the patinated values and vestiges of the Confederacy are standing in courthouse lawns and courtyards instead of constructing bridges that uphold the values of Heather Heyer.

In Jefferson’s first Inaugural Address, he stated, “All too will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression.”

This principle is the bedrock of the society for which we continue to fight.