

November 29, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Majority Leader of the House  
H-107, United States Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Majority Leader McCarthy,

As the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress draws to a close, we, the undersigned organizations, strongly urge you to introduce and bring to the House floor a censure resolution condemning the pattern of racist and xenophobic comments made by Representative Steve King (R-IA) that are not befitting of any elected Member of Congress. Against his long backdrop of incendiary, anti-immigrant, and racist remarks, Rep. King recently used dehumanizing rhetoric when referring to immigrants from Mexico as “dirt” in a taped conversation with supporters.<sup>1</sup> We ask that before the end of this Congress you bring before the House a censure resolution and, upon passage, require Rep. King to stand in the well of the House chamber to receive the official condemnation of the body. We further ask that, upon being censured, Rep. King be denied leadership posts in any committee or subcommittee to which he may be assigned in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

On Monday, November 5, 2018, Rep. King addressed a group of supporters during a rally in Webster City, Iowa. While speaking about jalapeño peppers, according to an article by The Weekly Standard, he said, “I guess I’m going to have to go and get some dirt from Mexico to grow the next batch.” An audience member added “Trust me, it’s already on its way” and Rep. King responded, “Well, yeah, there’s plenty of dirt, it’s coming from the West Coast, too. And a lot of other places, besides. This is the most dirt we’ve ever seen.”

Rep. King first denied the allegations in the article and claimed that he was referring to the leftist media, not immigrants. After challenging The Weekly Standard to provide proof, the publication produced an audio recording of the conversation that made it clear that Rep. King was referring to Mexican immigrants as “dirt.”<sup>2</sup>

The remarks by Rep. King came during an already contentious moment for his campaign, as the National Republican Congressional Committee had recently rebuked his endorsement of far-right causes and white supremacists, and corporate donors such as Land O’Lakes and Purina announced they would no longer contribute to his campaign.<sup>3</sup>

We are deeply concerned with Rep. King’s remarks about Mexican immigrants and urge you to not take his words lightly. The use of dehumanizing language such as this has, in the past, led to the normalization of bigotry and abuse towards immigrants of color. Recall the dehumanizing of Jews during the Holocaust, the Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide, and the Rohingya in Myanmar. Language such as this further exacerbates hostility and violence.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Rubenstein, "Did Steve King Just Refer to Immigrants as 'Dirt'?" The Weekly Standard, November 07, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.weeklystandard.com/adam-rubenstein/did-steve-just-refer-to-immigrants-as-dirt>.

<sup>2</sup> The Weekly Standard, YouTube, November 10, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wnmRL4q12Wk>.

<sup>3</sup> Dan Mangan, "GOP Fund Won't Help Rep. Steve King in Iowa Race Due to His Support for White Supremacists," CNBC, October 31, 2018, , accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/10/31/gop-fund-wont-help-steve-king-in-tight-race-due-to-white-supremacist-support.html>.

Furthermore, Rep. King's comments did not come out of thin air. He has a long history of xenophobic, racist, and white supremacist remarks:

- On August 24, 2018, Rep. King met in Austria with members of the Freedom Party, a far-right political party founded by a former Nazi SS officer, and sat for an interview with the Freedom Party-aligned publication, *Unzensuriert*, in which he argued that he believed that white Europeans are being replaced by minorities and that “western civilization is on the decline.”<sup>4</sup>
- On October 16, 2018, Rep. King endorsed Faith Goldy, a far-right candidate for Toronto Mayor.<sup>5</sup> Goldy is a white nationalist who participated in the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, VA. Goldy has recommended a book supporting the “elimination of Jews” and has argued homosexuality was a cause for the Holocaust.<sup>6</sup>
- On June 22, 2018, Rep. King told Breitbart News radio he wanted to deny Somali-American Muslims the right to work at meat-packing plants in his congressional district because he believed their true motive for processing pork in those facilities was to send non-Muslims “to hell and it must make Allah happy.” Rep. King continued, “I don’t want people doing my pork that won’t eat it, let alone hope I go to hell for eating pork chops.”<sup>7</sup>
- On June 12, 2018, Rep. King shared a tweet from Mark Collett, a British neo-nazi who is a self-professed admirer of Adolf Hitler.<sup>8</sup> When asked about the tweet, a spokesperson for Speaker Ryan said “the speaker has said many times that nazis have no place in our politics, and clearly members should not engage with anyone promoting hate.” After being rebuked, Rep. King refused to back down, arguing that “then it’d be like I’m admitting that I did something, now I’m sorry about it. I’m not sorry. I’m human.”<sup>9</sup>
- On December 8, 2017, Rep. King shared a tweet quoting Hungary’s far-right Prime Minister Viktor Orban, “Mixing cultures will not lead to a higher quality of life but a lower one.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Mike DeBonis, “Rep. King Met with Far-right Austrians on Trip Funded by Holocaust Memorial Group”, The Washington Post, October 25, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/holocaust-memorial-group-unwittingly-funded-rep-kings-meeting-with-far-right-austrians/2018/10/25/a18f4f6a-d875-11e8-83a2-d1c3da28d6b6\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.2f8416c8c427](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/holocaust-memorial-group-unwittingly-funded-rep-kings-meeting-with-far-right-austrians/2018/10/25/a18f4f6a-d875-11e8-83a2-d1c3da28d6b6_story.html?utm_term=.2f8416c8c427).

<sup>5</sup> Steve King, “Faith Goldy, an Excellent Candidate for Toronto Mayor, Pro Rule of Law, Pro Make Canada Safe Again, Pro Balanced Budget, &...BEST of All, Pro Western Civilization and a Fighter for Our Values. @FaithGoldy Will Not Be Silenced. <https://twitter.com/FaithGoldy/status/1052230525509885954>,” Twitter, October 17, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://twitter.com/SteveKingIA/status/1052390445735706624>.

<sup>6</sup> Dailymail.com Reporter, “Meet Toronto's White Nationalist Poster Girl Who 'courts Controversy with Her Far-right Views””, Daily Mail Online, November 10, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6374001/Meet-Torontos-white-nationalist-poster-girl-courts-controversy-far-right-views.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Kyle Cheney, “Steve King Singles out Somali Muslims over Pork”, POLITICO, June 22, 2018, accessed November 26, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/22/steve-king-muslims-pork-664949>.

<sup>8</sup> Steve King, “Europe Is Waking Up...Will America...in Time?” Twitter, June 12, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://twitter.com/markacollett/status/1006479306174926849>, <https://twitter.com/SteveKingIA/status/1006514881888169984>.

<sup>9</sup> Manu Raju, “King Says Retweet of Nazi Sympathizer's Message Was Unintentional” CNN, June 27, 2018, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/26/politics/steve-king-retweet-nazi-sympathizer/index.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Steve King, “Diversity Is Not Our Strength. Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, ‘Mixing Cultures Will Not Lead to a Higher Quality of Life but a Lower One.’ <https://voiceofeurope.com/2017/12/hungarys-pm-mixing->

- On March 12, 2017, Rep King tweeted that we “can’t restore our civilization with somebody else’s babies.”<sup>11</sup> In response to this retweet, Speaker Ryan’s spokesperson observed that “the speaker clearly disagrees and believes America’s long history of inclusiveness is one of its great strengths.”<sup>12</sup>
- On July 18, 2013, Rep. King, referencing Dreamers, said, “For everyone who’s a valedictorian, there’s another 100 out there that they weigh 130 pounds, and they’ve got calves the size of cantaloupes because they’re hauling 75 pounds of marijuana across the desert.”<sup>13</sup>
- On November 30, 2011, Rep. King questioned the unconstitutionality of racial profiling during a hearing of the immigration subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee.<sup>14</sup>

Over the years, Rep. King’s comments have earned the praise of former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, white nationalist Richard Spencer, and countless other prominent racists who take heart in knowing that someone who shares their views is allowed a prominent place in the U.S. House of Representatives. Indeed, Rep. King continues to be treated as a Member in good standing within the Republican caucus. The anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, racist and homophobic examples above are only a fraction of the countless hateful remarks and actions by Rep. King. Allowing him to continue to spread these dangerous ideologies normalizes this behavior and places already vulnerable groups of people in danger.

The House of Representatives is the people’s house. As a member of this body, representatives should reflect the voices of their constituencies and also the nation at large. Rep. King has failed to execute these duties and instead dishonors the people’s house and the nation. We strongly urge you to demonstrate your disapproval by taking disciplinary action and censuring Rep. King. The undersigned organizations urge you to hold Rep. King accountable.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

32BJ SEIU

African American Ministers In Action

America’s Voice

American Federation of Teachers

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

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[cultures-will-not-lead-to-a-higher-quality-of-life-but-to-a-lower-one/](#),” Twitter, December 08, 2017, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://twitter.com/SteveKingIA/status/939117527375990790>.

<sup>11</sup> Steve King, “Wilders Understands That Culture and Demographics Are Our Destiny. We Can’t Restore Our Civilization with Somebody Else’s Babies. <https://t.co/4nxLipafWO>” Twitter, March 12, 2017, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://twitter.com/SteveKingIA/status/840980755236999169>

<sup>12</sup> The Daily Beast, “Paul Ryan on Steve King’s ‘Babies’ Comment: I Disagree,” The Daily Beast, March 13, 2017, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/paul-ryan-on-steve-kings-babies-comment-i-disagree>.

<sup>13</sup> Todd Beamon and John Bachman, “Rep. Steve King Slams Norquist Over Attacks on Immigration,” Newsmax, July 18, 2013, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/king-norquist-attacks-immigration/2013/07/18/id/515882/>.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Rosenthal, “Yes, Racial Profiling Is Illegal”, The New York Times, December 05, 2011, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/12/05/yes-racial-profiling-is-unconstitutional/>.

Anti-Defamation League  
APIDA  
Arab American Institute  
ART NOT WAR  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Bend the Arc Jewish Action  
CASA  
Center for American Progress  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Church World Service  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
CREDO  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Engage Action  
Faith in Public Life  
FIRM Action  
Franciscan Action Network  
Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement  
Generation Progress  
ICNA Council for Social Justice  
Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti  
Islamophobia Studies Center  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Center for Justice  
Keshet  
Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
MALDEF  
MAPS-AMEN (American Muslim Empowerment Network)  
Mi Familia Vota  
Muslim Advocates  
Muslim League of Voters  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
National Black Justice Coalition

National Center for Lesbian Rights  
National Council of Churches  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)  
National Education Association  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Immigration Law Center Immigrant Justice Fund  
National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)  
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
National Organization for Women  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
National Urban League  
National Wesleyan Church  
OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates  
Only Through US  
People For the American Way  
Poligon Education Fund  
Pride at Work  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)  
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
The Pluralism Project  
The Sikh Coalition  
UltraViolet  
United We Dream  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Voto Latino  
Western States Center  
WOLA  
Yemeni American Merchants Association

Zakat Foundation of America

**State and Local Organizations**

American Family Voices

Americans for Democratic Action Iowa

American Muslims for Palestine-NJ chapter

Arkansas United

Bend the Arc: Pittsburgh

Casa San Jose

Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism-California State University, San Bernardino

Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa

Central American Resource Center DC

Church Women United in New York State

Cleveland Jobs with Justice

Community Visions Burien

Council on American-Islamic Relations-Greater Los Angeles

Council on American-Islamic Relations-Georgia

Council on American-Islamic Relations-New Jersey

Council on American-Islamic Relations-Pittsburgh

Council on American-Islamic Relations-Cincinnati

Council on American-Islamic Relations-Massachusetts

Culinary Union

Equality North Carolina

Families Rights Network

Friends of Broward Detainees

Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition

HANA Center

Indivisible Eastside-WA

Indivisible Iowa

International Institute of New England

InterReligious Task Force on Central America and Colombia

Iowa Citizen Action Network

Iowa Federation of Labor

Iowa Main Street Alliance

Iowa State Education Association  
Islamic Center of Morris County Inc.  
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition  
Mazzoni Center  
Mississippi Center for Justice  
MomsRising  
Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest  
New York Immigration Coalition  
NJ Interfaith  
Muslim Legal Fund of America  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
NM Dream Team  
One Iowa  
OneAmerica  
Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition  
Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN)  
Planned Parenthood Voters of Iowa  
Progress Iowa  
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada  
Quixote Center  
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment  
Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network  
Sakhi for South Asian Women  
Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center  
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN)  
Sisters of Mercy South Central Community  
South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center  
The LGBT Center OC  
Taos Immigrant Allies  
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO)  
Wallingford Indivisible  
Wayne Action for Racial Equality (WARE)  
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center

Young Democrats of Seminole County