



# OPEN LETTER TO IOWA VOTERS

Dear Fellow Americans of Iowa,

Every four years, you lead in our country's tradition of grassroots democracy by hosting the first major event in determining the candidates for President of the United States.

In the current divisive political climate, we reach out to you because it is more important than ever to give a clear and early message to a few of our candidates who espouse views that are not only hurtful but also an affront to the values of freedom and equal opportunity that we all hold dear.

We, the American people, will not be taken in by emotional and fearful rhetoric that neither assesses the situation in our country accurately nor presents solutions that are rational, workable, or practical.

Many of us also do not automatically buy into the notion that America is lacking in greatness. America is great and we need to elect a President who has confidence and faith in our greatness and will build on our progress as a nation.

Building walls, closing borders and segregating populations based on their religion are all policies reflective of some of the worst, most regrettable times of human history. We lament past injustices of rounding up innocent Japanese Americans and sending them to internment camps, and we feel ashamed turning away Jewish refugees in a time of heightened xenophobia during World War II, forcing them to return to certain death. Our vision for America is one that advances our legacy of power through diversity as opposed to those who want to push our society back decades, if not centuries.

We understand that our country faces great challenges today, but we also know we are at our best when we are united and at our worst when we turn on one another. Candidates who promote divisiveness among our population would have us forget that our great American experiment, as put forth by our Founding Fathers, is based on us being an inclusive nation working together and building upon the ideas and values established in our Constitution: freedom, pluralism and democracy.

Those who speak only about fears want us to forget that America's strength rests on our unique diversity, "**E. Pluribus Unum, from many, come one**," and our rich history of welcoming people to our shores. The words on the Statue of Liberty, "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free," meant something to all of us whose ancestors fled persecution to find a home in America and should still have meaning now, even in these times of unease.

With your caucuses a few days away, you have the chance to speak up and set the national tone about the America you and the rest of us want to see. Freedom, pluralism and democracy — that's what America stands for. We look forward to hearing and seeing how the 2016 presidential elections will start in your great state of Iowa.

Signed,

Interfaith Leaders

