

Dear Senator Harris:

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” — Martin Luther King Jr. This dream has not yet been fulfilled. Over 250 African-American people were killed by police in 2016, 22 percent of Hispanic-Americans admitted to having experienced discrimination, Muslim-American’s lives are clouded by xenophobia, irrationally suspected for wrongdoings committed by the microscopic minority with an extremist mindset, while many suffering refugees are stopped from entering the US. Where do we stand? When will we let go of something as minute as skin color or religion and open our eyes to see that every individual is defined by their ambitions and their actions?

Many believe that all remains of the heavy segregation once present in America is a matter of the past. This notion is completely contradicted by recent actions in light of the new presidency. Though Muslim-Americans have been victims of immense inequity socially, political actions have been taken to prevent Muslims from entering the country on the basis of religion. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”, states the Constitution, yet an act blatantly created to prevent a certain religion from entering the country is currently in action.

As a senator, you represent the voice of the people and allow a check and balance to be put on everyone and everything who believe such actions are just and done for the betterment of American citizens. In parallel, you also have the power to write new bills standing up for what is Constitutional and is done with the intention of keeping the foundational beliefs America was built on: equality, integrity, and justice. I hope you will use your major influence on the future of our country to prevent such actions from being repeated in the future, and work towards creating bills to improve and better the state of racial and religious discrimination in our country. As America’s diversity increases, so does America’s fear of diversity in proportion. We need to accept rather than segregate, to see that beneath our skin color and religious beliefs, we are human.

We are a country made up of immigrants. Seeing my parents, themselves immigrants, enhance not only my life but the lives of many around them has greatly widened my awareness on the role such individuals play on the status of our country. Allowing such intolerance seems to be not only a breach of the Constitution, but also to the direction in which our country is headed. Beneath all skin, whether it is of natives or of immigrants, there is a soul; this soul determines who we are. “Our true nationality is mankind.” — H.G Wells. Maybe one day, when we learn to embrace with open arms, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream will come true.

Sincerely,

Avighna Suresh