

Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy
Executive Board Statement on the New U.S. Presidency
January 20, 2017

The Executive Board of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy issues this statement as a show of its strong opposition to the Islamophobic, racist, sexist, ableist, anti-immigrant policy positions articulated by the new President. More than that, the Executive Committee affirms its resolute commitment to the ideals and values of the broad tradition of American philosophy; namely, democracy as a way of life, cultural pluralism, social and economic justice, racial and gender equality, and an inclusive and diverse American Society.

The history of philosophic thought in America shows us that the new President's election slogan was misguided. Instead of asking us to make America great again, American philosophers have always encouraged Americans to make America greater, that is, more inclusive, more connected, ready to be wrong, and ready to innovate to make sure that everyone can be part of the democratic life. Our tradition includes Jane Addams, who worked with immigrants and laborers, Alain Locke, who wrote on behalf of black persons, and many, many historical and contemporary philosophers who argue for respect and equal treatment of all people. American philosophers have always understood our world to be imperfect but worthy of our efforts. They, and we, have always worked to meliorate that imperfection through the hard work of finding common ground and moving toward shared ends, and this dedication to melioration and resistance can be found in all of the great movements of social justice in our country. Nonetheless, they, and we, have also been willing, when necessary, to draw lines that cannot be crossed, that is, when no common and just ground can be found. We must draw such a line at this time. We must stand against injustice even when it wears a democratic mask.

We invite all Americans to embrace their philosophical heritage and participate in it. The Executive Board believes this necessitates a commitment on behalf of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy and all of its members to work diligently in the coming four years to uphold our values and to use all of the resources at our disposal as scholars, teachers, advocates for justice and conscientious citizens to fight against regressive and oppressive policies and the harm they could do to untold millions in this country and abroad. Stand with us, against hatred and injustice in all its forms. Engage your communities and let us work together to make America greater. As Martin Luther King, Jr. believed, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." We, as American philosophers, will continue to work on bending history even as we create it. We encourage you to join us in that endeavor.

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