November 16, 2026

Re: *Condemning the Trump Administration's Escalating Attacks on Black and Women of Color Leaders*

To House Speaker Mike Johnson, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer,

cc: Members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, House Oversight Committee, and Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

We, the 50+ undersigned organizations, condemn the Trump administration's misuse of the federal government to target prominent Black women and women of color leaders, including New York Attorney General Letitia James, Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook, Rep. Ilhan Omar, Rep. LaMonica McIver, and Judge Ana Reyes.

These attacks are not isolated incidents. Together, they form a deliberate pattern of using the power of the Trump administration to intimidate, discredit, and punish women of color who hold positions of public trust. When leaders are targeted simply for doing their jobs, it sends a chilling message to every woman of color who aspires to serve, and it undermines the institutions our democracy depends on. Congress has both the authority and the responsibility to respond.

We therefore call on Members of Congress to:

1. Publicly condemn these **escalating** attacks whenever they occur and call them what they are: gendered and racialized "anti-DEI" attacks on accomplished and effective leaders for doing their jobs, intended to erode our democracy and distract from this President's failures to lead the country.

2. Make it clear that instead of focusing his administration on improving the lives of everyday people, President Trump is using taxpayer-funded government resources to target women of color and deter them from participating in our democracy.

3. Pass legislation that would protect against targeted attacks against lawmakers, elected officials, judges, and agency leaders based on baseless or politically motivated claims and prevent weaponization of the federal government, including the Office of Special Counsel (OSC).

President Trump promised that his second term would be marked by political retribution against his perceived political enemies, and he has carried out the promise.[1] To the detriment of our democracy, President Trump has moved past criticizing his enemies and now is weaponizing the government to prosecute them. He is waging war on racial and gender diversity and against

[1] Kathryn Watson, *Trump Suggests He or Another Republican President Could Use Justice Department to Indict Opponents*, CBS NEWS (Nov. 10, 2023), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-weaponization-justice-department-political-opponents.

nonprofit organizations like the Southern Poverty Law Center, in an effort to turn back the gains made by the expansion of civil rights.[2]

Trump's Targeting of His Political Enemies: A Focus on Black Women and Women of Color Leaders.

President Trump has systematically targeted Black women and women of color leaders by dismissing their expertise, leveling accusations of fraud without evidence, and relying on sexist, racist, and xenophobic stereotypes to paint them as unqualified or corrupt. These baseless claims then become a pretext for action. His administration has used them to justify criminal charges against these leaders and, in one case, to attempt to deport a sitting member of Congress. For example:

Letitia James, New York's Attorney General and respected legal mind, was targeted by President Trump after her office held him accountable in a civil fraud case over his business practices.[3] James has fought to lower costs for working New Yorkers, recovering $9 billion from individuals and corporations that took advantage of them and successfully championing legislation that protects New Yorkers from predatory lending.[4]

In line with her dedication to protecting everyday New Yorkers, James was able to successfully bring fraud claims against Trump, his sons, and the Trump Organization who issued false financial statements and business records.[5] As retribution, Trump has since 2025, without evidence, used the Department of Justice to open multiple investigations and seek several failed indictments against James for holding him accountable.[6]

Lisa Cook, a renowned economist and member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, is being targeted by President Trump as part of his effort to force independent economic agencies to bend to his agenda, regardless of the consequences for the public or the U.S. economy. Cook

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[2] Indictment, United States v. S. Poverty Law Ctr., Inc., No. 2:26-cr-00139 (M.D. Ala. Apr. 21, 2026), ECF No. 1, https://www.justice.gov/opa/media/1437146/dl.

[3] *People v. Trump*, 249 A.D.3d 21 (App. Div. 2025), https://nycourts.gov/reporter/3dseries/2025/2025_04756.htm.

[4] N.Y. State Att'y Gen., *Meet Letitia James*, https://ag.ny.gov/about/meet-letitia-james.

[5] *People v. Trump*, 249 A.D.3d 21 (App. Div. 2025).

[6] *See* Chris Strohm, *US Attorney on James Mortgage Probe Resigning Under Pressure*, BLOOMBERG L. (Sept. 20, 2025, 12:11 AM UTC), https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/trump-officials-removing-us-virgina-attorney-over-james-probe; Press Release, U.S. Att'y's Off. for the E.D. Va., New York State Attorney General Indicted (Oct. 9, 2025), https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/new-york-state-attorney-general-indicted; Scott MacFarlane & Joe Walsh, *Grand Jury Refuses to Re-Indict Letitia James After Earlier Fraud Charges Were Thrown Out*, CBS NEWS (Dec. 4, 2025), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/letitia-james-grand-jury-doj-declines-to-indict; Hannah Rabinowitz et al., *Justice Department Fails to Reindict Letitia James for a Second Time*, CNN (Dec. 11, 2025), https://kvia.com/politics/cnn-us-politics/2025/12/11/justice-department-fails-to-reindict-letitia-james-for-a-second-time/; Sarah N. Lynch & Jacob Rosen, *U.S. Prosecutors Pursue New Criminal Probe into New York AG Letitia James over Financial Transactions*, CBS NEWS (Jan. 9, 2026), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/prosecutors-begin-new-inquiry-into-financial-transactions-between-letitia-james-and-her-hairdresser-2-sources-say/.

brings more than 20 years of experience in economics, finance, and international development.[7] Her economic expertise is reflected in her service on the Board's Committee on Financial Stability, which she joined in 2022 and now chairs.[8]

Since 2025, President Trump has repeatedly tried to remove Cook from the Board by tarnishing her reputation with baseless mortgage fraud allegations.[9] After the Supreme Court ruled on June 29, 2026, that he lacked cause to fire her, he issued a memorandum on October 7, 2026, establishing a White House "committee of inquiry" to find new grounds for her removal.[10]

Representative LaMonica McIver has dedicated her career to public service. As the youngest Black woman from New Jersey to ever serve in the U.S. House of Representatives,[11] she has secured at least $10 million in federal community funding for her district.[12]

However, on May 9, 2025, while Rep. McIver was carrying out her congressional oversight duties at an ICE detention facility, she, fellow members of Congress, and Newark Mayor Ras Baraka were confronted by federal agents. Of everyone present, only Rep. McIver was indicted on federal charges, and she now faces trial for doing her job as an elected official.[13] President Trump's inhumane detention conditions and unjust deportation of law-abiding immigrants have drawn criticism across the political spectrum. By prosecuting Rep. McIver, he is making an example of her for daring to call attention to his cruel immigration tactics.

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[7] Bd. of Governors of the Fed. Rsrv. Sys., *Lisa D. Cook* (last updated Sept. 13, 2023), https://www.federalreserve.gov/aboutthefed/bios/board/cook.htm.

[8] Lisa D. Cook, Governor, Bd. of Governors of the Fed. Rsrv. Sys., *Moving Toward Better Balance and Implications for Monetary Policy*, Address at the Economic Club of New York (June 25, 2024), https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/cook20240625a.htm; Lisa D. Cook, Governor, Bd. of Governors of the Fed. Rsrv. Sys., *Reflections on Financial Stability*, Address at the Yale Program on Financial Stability, Yale School of Management (Mar. 26, 2026), https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/files/cook20260326a.pdf.

[9] Erin Doherty & Dan Mangan, *Trump Tells Fed's Lisa Cook She's Fired; She Says "He Has No Authority to Do So,"* CNBC (Aug. 26, 2025), https://www.cnbc.com/2025/08/25/trump-fires-lisa-cook-fed-powell.html;Mary Cunningham, *Trump's Move to Fire Fed Governor Lisa Cook Could Give Him Leverage over Fed Board, Analysts Say*, CBS NEWS (Aug. 27, 2025), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-lisa-cook-investors-fed-independence.

[10] Memorandum on Establishment of a Committee of Inquiry to Investigate Allegations of False Statements by Lisa DeNell Cook (Oct. 7, 2026), https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/10/establishment-of-a-committee-of-inquiry-to-investigate-allegations-of-false-statements-by-lisa-denell-cook/.

[11] *Meet LaMonica*, CONGRESSWOMAN LAMONICA MCIVER, https://mciver.house.gov/about/meet-lamonica; *McIver, LaMonica*, BIOGRAPHICAL DIRECTORY OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/M001229.

[12] Press Release, Rep. LaMonica McIver, *McIver Secures Over $10 Million for NJ-10* (Feb. 20, 2026), https://mciver.house.gov/media/press-releases/mciver-secures-over-10-million-for-nj-10.

[13] Christian Martinez, U.S. Lawmaker McIver Indicted on Charges of Impeding Law Enforcement, Reuters (June 10, 2025), https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-lawmaker-mciver-indicted-3-counts-impeding-law-enforcement-us-attorney-says-2025-06-10/. Note that Mayor Baraka was charged with trespassing, but these charges were quickly dismissed. The judge criticized Habba for using an arrest to advance a political agenda. Federal Judge Scolds Prosecutor While Dismissing ICE Facility Trespassing Charge, FD.org (May 22, 2025), https://www.fd.org/news/federal-judge-scolds-prosecutor-while-dismissing-ice-facility-trespassing-charge.

Representative Ilhan Omar is a seasoned community leader and public official.[14] During the COVID-19 pandemic, she passed federal legislation that guaranteed meals for 22 million children.[15] Moreover, she has worked tirelessly to secure affordable housing funding for her constituents through the federal budget process.[16]

Since her first day in office, President Trump has targeted Rep. Omar with racist, anti-Muslim, xenophobic, and threatening rhetoric.[17] Undeterred, she has continued to speak out against his administration, especially its treatment of immigrants during his second term.[18] She has suggested that the militarized ICE presence in Minneapolis in December 2025 was a direct result of the President's repeated disparaging comments about Somalis and her citizenship.[19] Now, Trump's attacks have escalated from words to action. Just weeks before midterm elections, on October 12, 2026, federal agents raided Rep. Omar's home in Washington, D.C., as part of an investigation seeking to strip her of her citizenship. [20]

Judge Ana Reyes is an accomplished former litigator, with more than two decades of experience and now serves as a federal judge on the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.[21] Before joining the bench, she provided countless pro bono hours to help refugees obtain asylum.[22] In 2015, the *National Law Journal* named her one of its Outstanding Women Lawyers.[23]

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[14] *Omar, Ilhan*, BIOGRAPHICAL DIRECTORY OF THE U.S. CONGRESS, https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/O000173.
[15] Rep. Ilhan Omar, *End of Term Progress Report* (Dec. 16, 2020), https://omar.house.gov/end-term-progress-report.
[16] Press Release, Rep. Ilhan Omar, *Rep. Omar Advances over $12 Million for 15 Local Projects in Government Funding Package* (Mar. 7, 2024), https://omar.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-omar-advances-over-12-million-15-local-projects-government-funding-package.
[17] Felicia Sonmez & Mike DeBonis, *Trump Tells Four Liberal Congresswomen to 'Go Back' to Their Countries, Prompting Pelosi to Defend Them*, Wash. Post (July 14, 2019), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-says-four-liberal-congresswomen-should-go-back-to-the-crime-infested-places-from-which-they-came/2019/07/14/b8bf140e-a638-11e9-a3a6-ab670962db05_story.html.
[18] Press Release, Rep. Ilhan Omar, ICYMI: Rep. Omar Pens Op-ed with Former Rep. Mike Honda on Trump's Use of the Alien Enemies Act (Mar. 27, 2025), https://omar.house.gov/media/press-releases/icymi-rep-omar-pens-op-ed-former-rep-mike-honda-trumps-use-alien-enemies-act.
[19] Stephen Swanson & Esme Murphy, *Rep. Ilhan Omar Sends Letter to DHS Seeking Clarity on Twin Cities ICE Crackdown*, CBS NEWS MINN. (Dec. 14, 2025), https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/ilhan-omar-dhs-letter-ice-operation-metro-surge/.
[20] *U.S. Probe of Rep. Ilhan Omar Focuses on Birth Date, Citizenship Papers, People Familiar Say*, Wash. Post (Oct. 13, 2026), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/10/13/rep-omar-investigation-focuses-birthdate-citizenship-papers-people-familiar-say/.
[21] Media Advisory, U.S. Dist. Ct. for the D.C., Ana C. Reyes Sworn in as United States District Judge (Feb. 2023), https://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/sites/dcd/files/J.%20Reyes%20Announcement%20Final%2020230223.pdf.
[22] *Id*.
[23] *Id*.

In a case involving a federal golf course, the administration's attorneys told the court that the National Park service would not make significant changes to the property. That same weekend, the administration removed 400 trees without warning.[24] After Judge Reyes ruled against the administration, President Trump called her a "crazed lunatic" on social media.[25] In its second complaint against the judge, the administration then sought her removal from the case for her "open hostility" toward it.[26] Following the President's post, Judge Reyes reported receiving multiple death threats.[27]

President Trump's racist and sexist attacks against women of color leaders are not merely statements to energize his followers or generate media attention. He is also weaponizing the government to destroy their reputations and careers.

Trump Would Rather Erode Democracy Than Face Accountability for His Unpopular and Dangerous Policies.

Instead of taking responsibility for his policies, President Trump is eroding democracy by weaponizing the government against his perceived political enemies, especially women of color leaders that try to hold him accountable. His job approval numbers sit below 40%, with the cost-of-living and the economy being one of the major factors driving the public's

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[24] Michael Katz, *Judge Eyes Sanctions in Trump D.C. Golf Course Dispute*, Yahoo News (Oct. 2026), https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/judge-eyes-sanctions-trump-d-211412576.html.

[25] *See* Molly Roberts, *How Judge Reyes Became the Lorax*, Lawfare (Oct. 27, 2026), https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/how-judge-reyes-became-the-lorax; *Judge Eyes Sanctions in Trump D.C. Golf Course Dispute*, Yahoo News (Oct. 2026), https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/judge-eyes-sanctions-trump-d-211412576.html; Tara Suter, *Who Is Ana Reyes, Federal Judge Trump Called a 'Crazed Lunatic'?*, The Hill (Oct. 19, 2026), https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/ana-reyes-federal-judge-trump-210352462.html; *Trump Slams Judge in Golf Course Fight, Says People Being Hit With Balls*, Newsweek (Oct. 27. 2026), https://newsweek.com/trump-slams-judge-in-golf-course-fight-says-people-being-hit-balls-east-potomac-golf-links-12622495; Alanna Durkin Richer, *Justice Department Files Complaint Against Judge Weighing Challenge to Trump's Transgender Troop Ban*, Associated Press (Feb. 21, 2025), https://www.news4jax.com/news/politics/2025/02/21/justice-department-files-complaint-against-judge-weighing-challenge-to-trumps-transgender-troop-ban/.

[26] *See* Molly Roberts, *How Judge Reyes Became the Lorax*, Lawfare (Oct. 27, 2026), https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/how-judge-reyes-became-the-lorax; *Judge Eyes Sanctions in Trump D.C. Golf Course Dispute*, Yahoo News (Oct. 2026), https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/judge-eyes-sanctions-trump-d-211412576.html; Tara Suter, *Who Is Ana Reyes, Federal Judge Trump Called a 'Crazed Lunatic'?*, The Hill (Oct. 19, 2026), https://www.yahoo.com/news/politics/articles/ana-reyes-federal-judge-trump-210352462.html; *Trump Slams Judge in Golf Course Fight, Says People Being Hit With Balls*, Newsweek (Oct. 27. 2026), https://newsweek.com/trump-slams-judge-in-golf-course-fight-says-people-being-hit-balls-east-potomac-golf-links-12622495; Alanna Durkin Richer, *Justice Department Files Complaint Against Judge Weighing Challenge to Trump's Transgender Troop Ban*, Associated Press (Feb. 21, 2025), https://www.news4jax.com/news/politics/2025/02/21/justice-department-files-complaint-against-judge-weighing-challenge-to-trumps-transgender-troop-ban/.

[27] Rick Maese, *Amid Attacks by Trump, Judge Weighs Golf Course Plan in Tense Hearing*, Wash. Post (Oct. 19, 2026), https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2026/10/19/amid-attacks-by-trump-judge-weighs-golf-course-plan-tense-hearing/.

dissatisfaction.[28] Polling from earlier this year found that 90% of respondents support policies that bring down inflation, 70% are worried about affording health care, and 68% of adults are worried about affording groceries.[29] President Trump promised that his policies would improve people's lives and lower costs. Instead, he has made it harder for everyday people to afford their basic necessities while his billionaire allies grow richer every day.

Conclusion

President Trump's gendered and racist attacks on women of color leaders are an effort to evade responsibility for his failures and to break the will of those who hold him accountable. Enough is enough. Members of Congress must not stand by while President Trump undermines our democracy and targets these leaders. Sadly, we have reached a point where new laws are needed to ensure our government serves its intended purpose, as a government of, by, and for the people, and not as a tool for a president's personal revenge.

Sincerely,

National Women's Law Center
National Partnership for Women & Families
Common Cause

Advocates for Youth
Alliance for Justice
American Atheists
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Voters Matter Fund
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
Color Of Change
Democracy Defenders Action
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
End Rape On Campus
Equal Rights Advocates
Gender Justice
Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
Indivisible
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Just Detention International
Justice + Joy National Collaborative

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[28] Lauren Sforza, *Trump Is Underwater Across Major Issues for Voters, New Poll Reveals*, Yahoo News (Sept. 5, 2025), https://www.yahoo.com/news/articles/trump-underwater-across-major-issues-100050554.html.
[29] Nat'l Women's L. Ctr., *Gender Equity and Basic Needs Programs Are Popular; Trump's Policies Are Not* (May 5, 2026), https://nwlc.org/resource/gender-equity-and-basic-needs-programs-are-popular/.

Just Solutions
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Lawyers for Good Government
Legal Momentum, The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Muslim Advocates
National Action Network
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Birth Equity Collaborative
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National LGBTQ+ Bar Association
National Organization For Women
National Urban League
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
People For the American Way
People Power United
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Public Citizen
Reproductive Freedom for All
Right to Be
RootsAction
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Stand Up for Science
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Legal Defense Fund (LDF)
UltraViolet Action
Unitarian Universalist Association
Win Without War
Women Lawyers On Guard Action Network