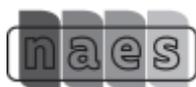


Official Statement regarding Unite the Right/March4Trump



National Association for Ethnic Studies

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In the strongest possible terms, the National Association for Ethnic Studies denounces, rejects, condemns, and abhors the violence in the name of white supremacy that the world witnessed in Charlottesville, Virginia on August 12, 2017. Our national offices are in the Commonwealth of Virginia and we remain very diligent in the fight against these forces.

Ethnic Studies was founded in part to fight against this very threat – the threat of white supremacist domestic terrorism, which was founded early in the nation’s history on settler colonialism. The beginnings of the ethnic studies movement can be traced to the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. Students on college campuses throughout the country led protests, took control of presidents’ offices, and demanded that universities hire professors of color and develop curriculum reflective of non-Eurocentric heritages.

What happened in Charlottesville began on the campus of the University of Virginia, a public university in the same state where codified racism began in 1619. While these recent acts of white supremacist violence were neither courted by nor supported by The University of Virginia, the events of August 11th and 12th were an attack on the community of Charlottesville for making a local decision to remove a Confederate statue in honor of Robert E. Lee and to change names of two city parks: formerly Lee Park was renamed Emancipation Park, and formerly (Stonewall) Jackson Park was renamed Justice Park.

We believe that we have an obligation to ensure the histories of chattel slavery, Indian removal/ (genocide), white supremacy, colonization, patriarchy, second-class citizenship, and heteronormativity are among the core experiences reflected in how we talk about historical development of The United States of America. We must continue to aggressively promote the importance of fostering community solidarity between and among marginalized groups.

We believe that one of the primary vehicles of resistance in this fight is within education where we can learn the histories of all groups to inform our present actions in community. Across the country, we fight to ensure that the histories of people of color and other marginalized groups are adequately prioritized and reflected in curriculums, in proposed amendments to state education standards, and in communities everyday. We are teachers in K-12 schools, professors at colleges and universities, and community activists on street corners in every city.

Since 1972, the National Association for Ethnic Studies has been long familiar with the vitriol of racism, bigotry and oppression – in our schools and in our communities. Yet, despite many efforts to dismantle ethnic studies, we continue to demand our histories are made central to the American story. With access to ethnic studies, we can all better understand how this latest attack connects to longstanding questions of history, violence, nationalism, voice, and inclusion. In classrooms nationwide, we affirm students and faculty who find themselves in the middle of debates over freedom of expression that can literally mean life or death. As a community of scholars, we affirm the need for sustained engagement across the US that rejects the complacency of believing these outbreaks are unique to one particular institution or region. However, we must do more. With efforts to introduce statewide ethnic studies curriculums in Oregon, Kansas, and Indiana, we have begun to see changes in our nation’s approach to education state by state in K-12 education. We ask for your help in lifting up this movement to ensure all children in secondary schools and all students in higher education have access to ethnic studies. We believe that our nation can beat hate through education.

In the past decade, the growth in ethnic studies has accelerated in higher education and in K-12 schools, fueled in part by demographic change and persisting inequities. From Harvard University to the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District in California, students and activists are yet fighting for ethnic studies. With SB 1070, HB 2281, and the pending decision we await in the *Arce* case Arizona has taken center stage in the fight to defend the legitimacy, necessity, and utility of ethnic studies throughout American culture and education. This past weekend Arizona was joined by Virginia as center stage in this fight against these abhorrent actions.

We call on all scholars, teachers, students, and community workers to engage in a sustained dialogue about how to establish ethnic studies curricula at all levels of education. Together, we can defeat hate. Apart, we aid its growth.