



SOCIETY OF AMERICAN LAW TEACHERS

SALT Statement on Human Rights Day, December 10

The Society of American Law Teachers (SALT), a community of progressive law teachers working for justice, diversity, and academic excellence, is committed to respect for the rule of law, to an inclusive society, and to social justice. SALT's current human rights agenda focuses on many critical issues, such as affirmative action, academic freedom, LGBTQ rights, immigrant rights, institutional racism, inequality, and the treatment of prisoners.

This Human Rights Day, SALT reaffirms its commitment to defending and securing the humanity, dignity, and rights of all people. We join with others across the political spectrum to express grave concerns about the future of civil, constitutional, and human rights under the administration of President-elect Donald Trump. Mr. Trump's public statements concerning race, gender, religion, disability, and immigration portend increased hostility for the rights of already marginalized populations. Recent reports, including those from the Southern Poverty Law Center, signal this increasingly hostile climate is likely to persist.

Mr. Trump's recent cabinet nominations only heighten SALT's concerns about the potential for decision making rooted in racism and xenophobia. For example, with the nomination of Steven Bannon as Chief Strategist, white supremacists find a voice and ally in the new administration. Rather than condemn and distance his administration from white supremacists, Mr. Trump has embraced them through the nomination of Mr. Bannon. Senator Jeff Sessions, nominated for Attorney General, has a record of taking positions hostile to immigrants, women, people of color, and the environment. Michael Flynn, designated National Security Officer, frequently criticizes the Muslim faith as the cause of Islamist terrorism, signaling support for anti-Muslim policies and sentiment. Many remaining candidates for key appointments promise to further divide our communities and put human rights at risk.

At this critical hour, SALT calls on lawyers, faculty, students, and all other concerned people to come together and stand against governmental attacks on social justice, inclusivity, and diversity. Each of us has an obligation to advance human rights. We must generate and engage in difficult conversations. We must uphold social justice principles through committed action. We must work within and across institutions to build safe, supportive spaces for students and community members whose rights are threatened. We urge you to join with members of your community—within SALT and wherever else you find people of conscience—and commit yourself to making concrete contributions toward equity, diversity, and justice.

The struggle for human rights is not new—nor is it limited to our country. In the words of Congressman John Lewis, "The struggle is not a struggle that lasts for one day or a few weeks or a few years. *It is a struggle of a lifetime.*" This Human Rights Day, SALT urges you to join us in our shared and persistent struggle for a more progressive, inclusive, and compassionate world.