



November 15, 2016

What I Believe

It is great that the 2016 United States presidential election has now concluded; whether we like results or not, our election system worked. Good people voted for Hillary Clinton, and good people voted for Donald Trump. Controversy remains about what a Trump presidency will look like. After the inflammatory talk throughout the campaign, we will look to see how President-elect Trump will follow-through with his victory speech when he said, "It's time. I pledge to every citizen of our land that I will be president for all Americans, and this is so important to me."

I am reminded of the story of the legendary labor and civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph's meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt before World War II, to get the president to take action against discrimination. President Roosevelt agreed with the need to change, and said, "I agree with you, now go out and make me do it." This is story is one of my favorite lessons showing how our American democracy can work if we listen to everyone and try to meet their needs. I believe in America and the possibilities of becoming greater when we work to make it become greater.

Democrats and Republicans have different philosophies on how to make America greater, but history teaches us that when there is a call to action by the people, America becomes greater. Civil rights, women's rights and labor rights resulted from citizens fighting to make Republicans and Democrats work together to make America greater. There are many fights ahead – we need to respect and enforce in law every citizens' right to vote, we need to fight for quality health care for all, and we need criminal justice reform, just to name a few. But even with these policy fights, we can all individually take part in direct action to build up our communities by adopting a child if we are able; volunteering to tutor and mentor in our community; helping the neighbors on our block; picking up trash in the streets; visit those who are in jail or prison; donating to our favorite charity; or following through with other positive actions we are called to do.

I am hopeful that the people in this country will participate in our process to continue to make America greater and fairer for everyone. President-elect Trump may have a learning curve on issues such as humanitarian needs and criminal justice reforms in America, but I am a believer that America becomes greater when we work to make it better. I am hopeful that America will look past a person's party affiliation to continue to make America work for the least of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Ford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford

State Representative-Eighth District