



LEXINGTON-FAYETTE URBAN COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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**Statement of Rabbi Marc Kline, Chair of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County
Human Rights Commission, Concerning the 2008 Presidential Election**

By the time you read this, the results of the election will be known. You will not need me to tell you that we are walking through history. Whether or not you supported President Elect Barack Obama; whether or not you like President Elect Barack Obama; you have to admit that these are historic times. Two hundred thirty two years after our Declaration of Independence proclaimed that all men are created equal, we can finally declare that we have reached the mountain top. This election makes a great many statements about this country, but before we can bask in the glory of many of them, we have to deal with the reality of the obstacles in the way of celebrating these blessings.

The tone of this election reached all new lows in dignity and respect. Many of the commercial advertisements and stump speeches went far beyond mudslinging politics. Many of the commercials were outright libel and in some cases even hate speech that has no protection under the First Amendment to our United States Constitution. With all of the ugliness that has defined previous elections, we have not before stooped to the lies that characterize candidates, especially for the highest office in our country, as “un-American,” “terrorist,” “senile,” or the host of slurs that serve not only to demean the candidates, but ultimately taint the office of President. There are now many who have been told by some leaders to believe that others are unfit for service and even for citizenship. This hate is antithetical to the commitment to equality that has made this country great. We have moved from our past, admitted our transgressions, and have made the statement that America is a nation great for all of its citizens. Even while we struggle to continue to learn of our failures, we commit anew to giving dignity to each other. The tenor of this election moved us backward in time. Senator John McCain made the point with amazing clarity, as he implored his supporters to leave the past in the past and join him in supporting his new president in leading this great country. Senator McCain’s call should resonate in the ears of all Americans. President-Elect Obama is not an African American President. He is the President. It is time for us to understand just how ugly we have treated each other over the past many months, and see the blessing that in this country, truly, all things are possible. We are not a collection of individuals. We are not a nation of political ideologies. We are not a nation of separation. We are one nation; one people, and we need to lift ourselves from the struggle that has separated us in ways not seen since the Civil War. We need to remember the American Dream of creating a world where we respect each other for the talents and passions that we bring to the work of

healing this country, bringing back to the forefront our souls the commitment to making this government by and for the people accountable to all people. We must now rewrite our history books to finally demonstrate the history of all Americans and not just the privileged ones. We have to reclaim our place in the world as partners in the quest for peace and healing. The record numbers of voters demonstrates that Americans love and care for this country, and want to share in its blessings. Truly these are historic times. We have seen the magic of change. We have made the concerns of Joe the plumber known and placed them side by side to the families who lost their retirement accounts to the perverse demons of a Wall Street run amuck. We stand together at the mountain top. The "Promised land" is just over the ridge. Can we join hand in hand together; reaffirm that out of many, we are one; return people to work; return from our exile from one another? Our President Elect affirms that we can. It will not be for Barack Obama that we must come back together. It will not be to validate the historic moment of watching our first minority President prepare to lead. Our need to return to each other is to fulfill the blessings guaranteed by our founding document, our Constitution, that we are all created equal and that each of us has an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is the American dream. May it be our commitment as well.

Rabbi Marc Aaron Kline
Commission Chair
