NASW-California Chapter, Region A
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Statement on the 2016 Presidential Election

In the 9/11 Commission Report report on the 2001 attacks on the US, the commission is quoted as saying, “The most important failure was one of imagination.”

It seems that the Democratic Party suffered from the same failure during this recent presidential campaign. I know that I heard on more than one occasion, “There’s no way he can be elected”

Many of us rested on our laurels and depended on what had been perceived as forward movement in our country—after all we had elected a black President for two terms.

Even as we watched the division between the parties become wider over the past sixteen years, we still could not imagine that someone with no political experience, who spoke with such divisive and hate-inciting language could be elected to the highest office of this great country.

It happened. We elected such a person. I use the phrase “we elected” because to claim President-elect Donald Trump as “not my President” undermines the democratic process. You may not have voted for him, but he is who won. Democracy is who we are, even if it doesn’t go the way we want it. “Now what?” we are all asking ourselves. Now is the time to mobilize. Now—

We need Social Workers more than ever. Our profession is the one that advocates for the disenfranchised. We see a social issue, we strive to understand it and we make changes to fix it.

The election of Donald Trump is no different. Our work just got significantly harder, but it is possible. We are social workers. We didn’t become social workers because we thought that problem-solving would be easy. If it were, there would be no need for our profession.

We can no longer sit back and trust that it will all work out in favor of our clients, communities and profession. The time is NOW.
It is time to take action. As a profession, we must be thoughtful and strategic; smart and organized. We must work within the bounds of our professional code of ethics to protect the gains we have made and to prevent future losses.

We must rise-up, speak-up and continue to do the good work we are doing as social workers: advocate for the vulnerable, be the voice for the invisible, represent the oppressed, WORK FOR CHANGE.

Thank you for your commitment to create change. Thank you for your hard and often unrewarded work in our communities.

Don’t give up: rise up, speak up, and continue to do the good work you are doing.

**Action Suggestions**

1) **Commit to staying informed**: even if it is difficult to learn what “the other” is advocating for. Be open.

2) **Think Globally, Act Locally**

3) **Get Social**: Advocate on your social media of choice for laws and policies that affect your clients. Share issues to increase awareness. A majority of Americans actually favor many of the policies that social workers advocate. They will benefit from more education.

4) **Choose One**: What’s a social work issue or concern that bothers you? What’s one issue that you’d like to right? Most likely there are many other people organized for that issue. Join then. Your experience, knowledge, and insight as a social worker will be invaluable.

5) **You’re not alone**: NASW and NASWCA are strong advocates for our clients and our profession. Join us. Contact your local NASW unit rep and offer ideas for organizing on behalf of our community, clients, and country.