



Dignity, Decency and Equality Coalition

Statement of Purpose

The Supreme Court recognizes that “evolving standards of decency mark the progress of a maturing society.” We, who subscribe to this statement, come from many walks of life – from various professional pursuits, geographic regions, religious traditions, racial persuasions and ethnic heritages. Yet, we hold in common the ideal that every person is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We believe that no person should be denied equal opportunity or equal protection under the law because of her race or gender.

For the sake of children, families, communities and the nation, the undersigned hereby reject prurient, debased, racist, sexist depictions and descriptions of women and men in media, including film, television, radio, Internet, satellite, cable, music and lyrics. We are determined that blacks, other minorities and women shall not bear the burden of race and gender discrimination. We are united in our determination to raise a new standard of decency free of gratuitous race and gender exploitation.

Without abridging the right to free speech guaranteed by the Constitution, and without singling out any genre or media platform, we reject indecent images and depictions that corrode the framework of decent society. We believe that an enlightened citizenry is the best guarantee of freedom. We accept responsibility for being savvy consumers of media and for conveying that knowledge to our children. We believe that public opinion is the most effective regulator of commercial activity, rendering censorship unnecessary.

We believe the marketplace of ideas should be open to all and we insist on claiming the worth of our work. For the sake of children, families, communities and the nation, the undersigned hereby reject double standards of employment, promotion, contracting and compensation. We are united in our determination to break the glass ceilings and walls that deprive the marketplace of our talents. We must be free to compete in a global economy based on our skills, education and ability without regard to gender or race.

We call on responsible image makers to consider the effect of their work on children’s self-esteem, women’s safety, and the nation’s security. In the information age, image is reality. We consciously invoke the spirit and courage of the 1920 Memphis Conference on Southern Women and Race Cooperation who determined that “since the public press often gives undue prominence to the criminal element among the Negroes, and neglects the worthy and constructive efforts of law-abiding Negro citizens, we pledge ourselves to cooperate with the men’s committees in endeavoring to correct this injustice and to create a fair attitude to Negroes and Negro news.”

We are determined to be free. We insist on taking our children to school in the morning or to sports practice in the afternoon without dreading for them to hear suggestive lyrics or comments of shock jocks on the radio. We will browse the Internet without encountering unsolicited pornography. We will listen to newscasts and other programming without having our sensibilities shocked, our dignity undermined or our character attacked.

In order to preserve our dignity, promote decency and equality, we are prepared to:

Use available technology to monitor and control objectionable content.

Say out loud what offends us and thereby create new standards of decency.

Report obscene, indecent and profane broadcasts to the Federal Communications Commission. Urge the Congress to expand FCC jurisdiction over obscene, indecent and profane material to cover the Internet, terrestrial/wireless and cable, since in a New Media age the medium of transmission is seamless.

Urge the Congress to adequately fund the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission so that it may protect and preserve fair employment practices.

Urge media conglomerates, directors, producers, artists and audiences to resist stereotypical depictions of blacks, other minorities and women. It is possible to be profitable while seeing women, African Americans and other minority communities in all of their diversity.

Resist advertising of corporations that insist on supporting obscene, indecent and profane lyrics and images and refuse to purchase material that is obscene, indecent or profane.

Vote with our dollars and with our ballots for decency, dignity and equality.