Dear friends and colleagues,

What happened to this nation last week deserved a moment of silence. We at CHC took the time to talk to each other about what this meant to us as individuals, to our families, to our communities, and to all the hard won victories that impact equity. In many ways, we will continue to move through a process that will take all types of responses and actions to understand what comes next for us as activists. Nearly half of the country decided it was ok to sit this one out and many in our communities voted for this new reality. That is truly difficult to reconcile.

We have an opportunity to take this moment to answer the call to be our best selves and take a step into the darkness and bring light to future generations. However, taking a moment to think about the meaning of these exit polls is critical. To take a hard look at ourselves as “progressives” or “liberals” and how we relate to each other when our issues don’t align squarely in the center, is critical. Did we get a little too complacent? Did we take each other for granted? Did we miss an opportunity to work together in a way that would have turned the tide of this election? We as activists need to look at this with honesty. We have lived through difficult periods that have challenged our democracy and in many cases exposed our lack of morality and humanity. But, during these times, great movements have been borne and therefore incredible wins have been achieved. As John Lewis has said, “You cannot be afraid to speak up and speak out for what you believe. You have to have courage, raw courage.” In this country, voting gives us that voice. Voting when our representatives come up for reelection in the next couple of years and holding them accountable is essential.

We must stand together, on solid ground, and show our young people and our citizens that our resolve is unwavering. We need to show that we are building a coalition of partners and residents that can organize and strategize across sectors, communities, and political lines. We must show up with open minds and open hearts. Our lives depend on our ability to swell civic participation, change the narrative around apathy within our communities, and ensure that those hard won civil rights victories live on. For the sake of all of us, we need to ensure this doesn’t happen again because the impact of this election will be felt for decades to come. We must stand up for one another. We must have each other’s backs. We must truly be a movement.

We stand ready to engage with our partners in figuring out this new and necessary strategy, although tears may still glean in our eyes. Under the new administration, there will be consequences that will break our hearts, but there will also be opportunities, including:

- Increasing our focus on local elections as an ongoing part of our work, not only during presidential elections.
- Protecting and advocating for the legal rights of immigrants and refugees
- Increasing the educational and work opportunities for men and boys of color
- Empowering women and girls of color to participate and take leadership positions in the political process

We must find solace in our civil rights history and look forward with intent and refocused energy for whatever comes next. As Zora Neale Hurston said, “if you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoy it.” We will not be silent!

In Community,
The CHC Family