

Speak out and act



PROGRESSIVE VIEWS

Laura Bray
KENDALL COUNTY
DEMOCRATIC PARTY

I write on Monday afternoon, bereft about the weekend's tweets and headlines. I shake my head and wonder, "What can one person do about all this hatred and bigotry – apparently more widespread than I ever imagined and fueled by our president?"

In the 1970s, Bruce Banner would say, "Don't make me angry. You wouldn't like me when I'm angry." But I don't turn into a raging green leviathan named Hulk.

Me? I use my superpower – I write.

I write to reject the fear-stoked prejudices and hatred of "the other" that the president's words and actions generate. I write to reject the stigmatization of people of color to "appeal to the base" to win votes and to distract from more substantive (and more difficult to solve) issues.

This administration resorts to such tactics because it cannot articulate or justify its own policies (be it ripping immigrant children from the arms of their parents or removing insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions or lack of support for the science behind climate change or standing with most of the rest of the world against North Korea's nuclear program.) Instead, it deploys dog-whistle attacks on vulnerable populations.

I write to demand that everyone repudiate and condemn the president's racist tweets and comments. Supporters justify such non-justifiable words because they want favorable Supreme Court justices or tax cuts or reductions in environmental protections. This is unacceptable.

Do his supporters really believe that receiving a larger tax refund is more important than how our president treats people of color? Or that nomination of a right-leaning Supreme Court justice is more important than the president's misogyny and repeated allegations of sexual assault against him?

In a Washington Post column on July 15, Max Boot called the president's comments "as blatant an example of racism and xenophobia as we have seen in our politics in my

lifetime." He continues, "There is nothing – nothing – more important in the United States than racism. Where you stand on that one issue defines who you are as a human being. Silence is complicity."

I write to throw a bucket of cold water into the faces of Republicans to urge them to wake up from their "ends justify the means" stupor. Words matter, and the president's are adversely affecting both our citizens and our standing in the world.

I write to implore everyone to take specific action against all these abuses. Yes, you can take action, even at the local level. Don't know how? I invite you to attend the next meeting of the Boerne Area Democrats (www.boerne-area-democrats.com), where you'll find a room full of more than 50 people full of suggestions on what actions to pursue.

Finally, I write to exhort all citizens to register to vote and take a close look at candidates in next year's elections – locally and nationally. In these parts, all incumbents are Republican. Where do they stand with respect to the president's racism? (On July 15, Reps. Hurd, Roy and Pete Olson of Sugar Land condemned the president's remarks. Where's the rest of the Texas Congressional delegation?)

Sen. John Cornyn's tepid "unforced error" comment from that same day is no better than silence, and perhaps worse, for excusing the president's words.)

Are our locally elected officials condemning the remarks, or better yet, taking concrete action against them?

If not, it's time to vote them out and select new leadership who will create a more just, compassionate and equality-filled Texas and nation.

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

— Abraham Lincoln (a Republican!)

See PROGRESSIVE, page 5

Laura Bray is deputy chairman of the Kendall County Democratic Party.