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August 17, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General of the United States  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I write to express our support for your decision to initiate an investigation into the horrific acts of domestic terrorism perpetrated against the American people on Aug. 12, 2017, in Charlottesville, Va. These events stand as a sobering reminder of the racist and anti-Semitic beliefs held by a malicious group of American white supremacists and neo-Nazis, who now feel empowered to use violence to incite terror and fear in our communities. Although we believe these groups are a heinous affront to American values, we honor the right to protest and associate embedded in the First Amendment. That makes your job even more important and tougher, since it is critical to ensure the safety of those whom these white supremacist groups intend to terrorize.

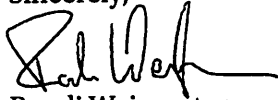
As you have stated, this act of domestic terrorism “strikes at the heart of American law and justice,” and such acts of racial hatred and bigotry “betray our core values” as Americans. But this moment requires more than simply denouncing hatred; it requires action to protect the rights and safety of American families from those who peddle terror and hate. Although we are encouraged by your commitment to support local law enforcement in their investigation of this heinous act of hate and by your stated commitment to “take the most vigorous action” to ensure justice prevails, we believe that this type of domestic terrorism, which is designed to create fear across our nation, requires a national response from the highest level of law enforcement to prevent continued terrorism and hate-based violence. We therefore call on you to direct the Justice Department to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into the recent actions of white supremacists in Charlottesville and to prosecute those responsible for these acts of hate-based, domestic terrorism under federal laws.

But, make no mistake, the terror and hatred unleashed in Charlottesville does not exist in isolation. It is being unmasked in communities across our great nation. Therefore, we further call on you not only to investigate what happened in Charlottesville, but to probe deeper into the agenda of white supremacist organizations and their neo-Nazi allies

present within the United States who may have plans for future violent confrontations. These steps are necessary to defend the American people against the proliferation of hate crimes and domestic terrorism.

The American people need assurance that the law will be enforced to protect them. We intend to closely follow the actions of the Justice Department to ensure that its response to what you correctly describe as an "evil attack that cannot be accepted in America," as well as any future attacks meant to undermine the vitality of our constitutional democracy, is sufficiently vigorous to ensure an end to the type of domestic terrorism witnessed in Charlottesville. Your task is not an easy one, but doing the right thing and enforcing the laws of the land never is easy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Randi Weingarten  
AFT President

RW : cmj

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee. The names are listed in alphabetical order and include the following: [Illegible names]

2. The second part of the document is a list of the names and addresses of the members of the committee who have been elected to the office of [Illegible title]. The names are listed in alphabetical order and include the following: [Illegible names]

*[Handwritten signature]*