

Sep. 30, 2020 1:04 pm

Opinion: Nurses must no longer stay silent

"We have a responsibility as nurses to speak up when we see violence, harm, and injustice being performed against others," says guest columnist Marion Leary.



This guest column was written by **Marion Leary**, MSN MPH RN, a nurse activist, innovator, and researcher. She is a member of Nurses for Biden.

This [Year of the Nurse and Midwife](#) is like nothing we could have envisioned.

With the ravaging effects of the coronavirus pandemic claiming close to [200,000](#) American lives, climbing economic and health disparities, devastating wildfires in California and Oregon, along with continual

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systemic racism and injustices, now is not the time for nurses and nursing organizations to remain silent.

Recently though, the [American Nurses Association \(ANA\)](#) once again voted to remain silent, by not endorsing a presidential candidate; in a letter sent after the vote, they described “whether it was in the best interest of the association’s mission, politically diverse membership, and long-term goals to endorse in the 2020 presidential election” and ultimately decided against an endorsement.

In the best interest of the association and membership ... visibly missing from that statement is the best interest of those we serve, our patients, communities, and fellow humans.

The ANA is one of the largest nursing organizations in the United States, [representing](#) 4 million nurses. The organization that claims to represent nurses, whose [values](#) as a profession [include](#) human dignity, integrity, autonomy, altruism, and social justice, chose not to endorse a presidential candidate, despite the troubling actions, policies, and rhetoric of the Trump administration over the last four years.

As a nurse and voter I will not sit on the sidelines, I will not stay silent, and neither should you! Silence is complicity.

We have a responsibility as nurses to speak up when we see violence, harm, and injustice being performed against others. As everyone likes to say, nurses are the [most trusted profession](#), yet how can you trust a profession that sits idly by, staying silent, while the Trump administration continues to allow a pandemic to run rampant, puts kids in cages, denies that climate change is real, stokes racial division, and allegedly supports an organization that performs medical procedures on detainees without their consent?

For the first time in 175 years, the magazine [Scientific American](#) endorsed a candidate for president. This should not be taken lightly. Their actions are incredibly brave, true to science, and show tremendous leadership.

I implore other organizations to do the same.

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Joe Biden and **Kamala Harris** believe in human rights, and climate change, they believe that masks and social distancing work, and they believe this country can be great again — not by denying our history of racism and injustice but by acknowledging that we need to do better by all of our citizens.

They have a [plan](#) for all of these issues and more.

The fight for the soul of our nation is now, and it should be led by nurses. So let's really make this the year of the nurse and midwife, vote Biden Harris!