

# *Stand Strong*

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Friends and Fellow Citizens,

When we stand strong  
together, making a difference,  
making a change in each other's  
lives, we become powerful and win.  
~Cherise A. Williams

As election day approaches, I hope you engage with this statement, mark specific phrases, and find messages that resonate with you as peace surrounds you.

Each moment in 2020 has been challenging for everyone. Many of our lives have changed forever. I share with you today the unacceptable moment no one saw coming. When, if ever, is taking a human life justified?

As we persevere through hardships and trials while living in a world that appears cruel and cold, we must stand strong together, making a difference, making a change in each other's lives, by challenging our loved ones to get to the polls and vote. This election is vital to us as voters and to the young people, the generation to come. I believe in them. Even during this chaos their dreams shall not die. Their dreams will live, if we do the right thing today. The young will have purpose, a future, and dreams that do in fact come true.

Your dreams shall not die. Your dreams will live.

Americans deserve better from the people in high offices in government and in the private sector. We must stand strong in our resolve to make a difference, to make a change. As we come together in unity, we need courage and determination to stand strong as we comfort those who have been faced with police brutality, the severe pain that severed families. We must stand strong, even in this moment of peril.

What have you endured during this pandemic? We have all suffered, but this is not the first time we faced pestilence that walked in darkness. We faced it before, and we won. We must again rise up and return to the benchmark of the original motto of *e pluribus unum*, which means "out of many, one." According to Aristotle, "Every great work of art contains the same feature: unity." Now is the time to come together in unity. A time to love. A time to heal. A time to unify. A time when we come together again and be better allies and advocates.

This is not a time to be silent. Now is the time to speak truth for the hopeless. Your voice matters. Your voice is powerful. I understand the pain you may be feeling at this moment. Put your pain into action. Every action counts.

How wonderful, how beautiful it is when we stand strong together in peaceful protesting, to make a difference. It is like the fragrance of anointing oil that flows down from the twelve gates of heaven. It is like the dew on Mount Hermon flowing down the slopes of Zion. Give ear, oh earth! Give ear, America! He that has an ear, let him hear.

For democracy to work, everyone must be treated equally. What does America want? She wants justice. America wants justice for the families who experience the bleeding trail of broken hearts, the gravel road of grief. Those families are hurting for the many black men and women who have lost their lives to police brutality. It is important we say his name: George Floyd. It is important we speak her name: Breonna Taylor. It is important that we speak the names of the many black lives taken by heartless acts of police brutality. They all died too soon, and for no reason. They died without justification. They died, and we weep for them. We must always remember them and pray.

As the mother of two sons, I am shaken by what I have seen and what I heard with my own ears. I tip my crown to the family of George Floyd and to the many other black families that have lost their sons and daughters to police brutality. When George Floyd cried, calling out to his mother while being murdered by a police officer, his cry disturbed the earth. He spoke to each and every one of us in his death. His cry was thunder in the desert that awakened nations everywhere. Diverse cultures came together from all walks of life. We stood strong!

As we find the grace to move forward and get out and vote on election day, I extend soft Kleenex to wipe your teardrops. There is a season, a time appointed, for everything. This season and every season thereafter is here for us to be silent no more. Silence does nothing. Strength does everything.

I do not have all the answers, but I will continue to work with officials, mentors, and experts to seek answers and educate our community. It is important for us to stay involved, to find solutions to the difficult problems America is facing.

Being part of the NAACP opens up many doors. The NAACP brings awareness to our communities, supports small businesses, and promotes volunteering. On June 3, 2020, I was invited to the NAACP emergency tele-town hall call with US Representative Val Demmings, NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson, CNN Political Commentator Keith Boykin, US Senator Cory Booker, and retired Public Safety Director of DeKalb County, Georgia, Dr. Cedric Alexander. We addressed the recent acts of police brutality. Heartless acts did not start today, though. They started four hundred years ago. With your help we can demand change. The

suffering we all have faced during this pandemic has built character in us. We have grown ever stronger.

William Shakespeare reminds us, “To thine own self be true.” Do not lose hope. Hope does not disappoint. I hope this statement gives you clear direction, new meaning, as we use the principle of self-examination. As each word impregnates you with thought; as you search within, looking at your life and stand strong in difficult times; as these trying difficult times give you new insight and understanding, continue to nurture your life in a special way. Be not weary in doing well. Allow peace to bring harmony in your aching soul.

Do not trouble your mind trying to figure out who you will vote for. Own your vote. At the appointed time, you will know. Just vote.

There is more to come. We must continue to use our voices to stand strong together, making a difference, making a change in each other’s lives. Standing strong even when we are distressed, facing difficulty, and feeling discomfort has taught each of us a lesson. Adversity and difficult times teach us what not to do in the future. We are not perplexed or forsaken. We will stand strong and win.

You may wonder how I know that adversity makes us stronger. My eyes have seen it. My ears have heard it. I have been on the other side. I know the American people are ready to stand strong and answer the call.

Many of my ancestors were slaves. Only my great-grandmother was born after slavery ended. My ancestors would not want me to stand down; therefore, I rise up. I rise up and reject mediocre leadership that drifts like a feather on the wind from one chaotic moment to the next. I rise up and ask, “Who is this giant spreading himself like poison ivy? Who is this giant eroding the minds of the American people and lying about a pandemic that is claiming the lives of many people?” We have not turned a corner on the pandemic. Instead, the cases are increasing.

According to the Johns Hopkins University Corona Virus Resource Center, almost 225,600 Americans have already died from the virus. The numbers increase every day. Something must be done! We need strong leaders who listen to what the doctors and scientists have to say. We need a rebirth of leaders. We must have leaders who refuse to stand by or stand down, leaders who stand strong, making a difference, making a change in the lives of Americans. We are the change. Dr. Shelton Goode said, “I will be the change I wish to see, and so should you.” Join with me and stand strong. Get to the polls and vote!

My heart was torn to pieces when I found out many young people under the age of eighteen have suffered from COVID-19. On CNN the president of the United States stated that the coronavirus did not affect anyone under eighteen. We the people know that statement is not true. We need facts, not fake news or fake facts that disrupt and distort the truth. I speak up. I speak out for our

young people, because Nurture the Powerful You Foundation, Inc., believes in them. Young people have a promising future. They must be ready for liftoff. I believe their dreams will live. I believe they will be the next generation that will influence the world to make a difference, make a change in the lives of others. They are the generation that will seek truth. They are not too young to make a difference. They must learn how to become influential. Now is the time for them to get involved. Those who are too young to vote can still join the NAACP.

<https://naacp.org/>.

Who are the giants in the land that launch tear gas and fire rubber bullets in crowds of peaceful protestors? Are they the same people who insult the troops who fought for America? I love those who fought in the Vietnam War. They are not losers or suckers. They stood strong.

American citizens, what are you going to do? Are you going to stand strong against trouble? American citizens, you must have a voice in the election process. Without a say, you yield to the ruling party. Continue to challenge your family and friends to mask up and vote.

Everyone reading this statement has a need that matters, whether it is education reform, economic reform, health reform, immigration reform, or police reform. How can your needs be met if you do not stand strong and fight for legislative change? Hold those in office accountable! Speak truth to power! You must mask up and vote!

We must stand strong for our loved ones who have preexisting health conditions. The Trump administration is working with the Supreme Court, trying to overturn the Affordable Care Act. “O Mighty Caesar! Doest thou lie so low?”

The Declaration of Independence informs us that we the people have the power to stand strong together and remove giants from office. Many strong leaders are running for office. What is their message? Candidates, your message is going to resonate with voters. You may not have all the answers, but do you have a vision?

As a voter, ask the one who walks in the cool of the day. When he speaks to you, write the vision. When you write the vision, create the plan to move forward and vote. Do not allow anyone to intimidate you or use devious ways to turn you away from voting. Voting-rights activists in the South were subjected to many forms of mistreatment and violence during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. If you have an issue, contact Election Protection <https://866ourvote.org/>. These folks will make sure your vote counts. Let us stand strong together, making a difference, making a change in each other’s lives, challenging our circle of friends to stroll to the polls and vote. Make sure you go in numbers. I have witnessed people jumping out of cars with a dog and fighting others on the street because they were holding Biden-Harris signs. I appeal to you, what we need is not division. We need cohesiveness. What we need is not violence. We need peace and love toward others.

I am part of the NAACP; therefore, on June 10, 2020, I was honored to receive another invitation to be on a call with NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson, former Vice President Joe Biden, Representative Marcia Fudge, and Ed Gordon, journalist and moderator, while we discussed the global health crisis and incidents of hate crimes. As I am involved, I propose that you too get involved. Get to the polls to vote. Is public policy the new love language? Public

policy is important. Public policy affects our daily lives. It concerns the issues of a large segment of society. Those who are elected should therefore know better and do better.

Continue to move forward and get your family and friends to the polls and vote. If you cannot drive grandma to the polls, ask a friend to do so. Every step you make to the polls counts. This is a vital moment; a historical moment. History is on the ballot. Allow these words that flow from my heartstrings to land on your ears like butterflies and whisper their message to you. Let the words melt in your mouth like honey and give you the energy to move into action.

Many of us have lost loved ones through this pandemic. Our memories of them should cheer us on as we walk through the valley of turmoil and onto that high ground of victory. I extend the garment of comfort to all who mourn. Something better waits on the other side of mourning—beauty for ashes and for the spirit of heaviness, the oil of joy. As you find the grace to move forward to reevaluate your life, I extend peaceful words to your heart and mind when these unprecedented times have wounded your aching soul. American gospel artist Richard Smallwood told us, “Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.” Even dark clouds eventually rise, and we must rise as well. We pray for healing in the land. Life sorrows may rush in, but know who is working in your life. This day and forever, you are liberated.

We will get through this era. “Tough times never last, but tough people do.” You have been given new life. Sunrise glory breaks over you. Even now we declare victory for your family. We pray you are healed in any area of your life where you feel pain. Stand strong and search within. Do not give up. Be strong and of good courage. If you cannot stand, I’ll stand strong for you. I stand strong, raising my fist with you. This gift to you I bring: every word written unto you will not go unnoticed. I propose that you get to the polls and vote. I understand if you lost someone or something special, but your simple song is not taken away. It sounds like “Amazing Grace.” Your love is my amazing grace that smiles upon me like a setting sun. ~Cherise A. Williams

I understand if you are suffering from economic pressure, but be not weary. You will fulfill your purpose. Through it all you still have your mind. Your ideas are coming together. Your vision will speak at its appointed time. We must come together with unification by taking action and holding police departments accountable for terrorizing our community. Senator Kamala Harris told us, “We have a chance to change the course of history.” What are you willing to do?

With your help we must stand strong together, making a difference, making a change in each other’s lives by challenging our loved ones to get to the polls and vote. Take a moment. Listen to the mission field whispering from the hills of Zion <https://iwillvote.com/>.

This season my son and I voted early by mail. When you vote by mail, follow all the instructions to the letter. Make sure you sign the back of the envelope. If you do not sign the back of the envelope, your vote will be invalid. Mail your ballot immediately. Do not wait!

We the people want to improve the quality of life. We need leadership standing with dignity and decency. We need leaders who give democracy new meaning as we fight for justice. We must make sure democracy is working for all. Folks may disagree, and it’s okay.

Some great commanders in chief who spoke clearly and well include John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and Barack Obama. We need more great leaders. It is important that you get out and vote the Biden-Harris ticket. We the people need commanders in chief who are memorable, truthful, and strong. Make a change and rise up for those whose faith has been shaken. Mask up and vote. We the people need leaders in office with wisdom. We must stand strong by using our powerful voices. We must stand strong behind the Biden-Harris ticket.

I speak as an American citizen.

I speak as a chief speechwriter.

I speak as a confident woman.

I speak as a Democrat.

I whistle as an eagle flying over troubled waters.

I speak as a woman of faith.

I speak as a miracle.

I speak as a mom.

I speak as a survivor.

I speak as a visionary.

I stand strong as a mirror, but I am only a mirror where you behold your own face. What do you do when you look in the mirror? You reflect. Now is the time for us to reflect on 2020, for we have learned what not to do for our future. Where do we begin? Where do you want to begin? Change starts with us. We want to improve the quality of our lives. Let us commit ourselves to change for the better. Own your vote. History is on the ballot. Taxes are on the ballot. Education is on the ballot. Your future is on the ballot. Your children's future is on the ballot. Your life may even be on the ballot.

I understand racial tension is all around us. You are probably being stereotyped like me. When you know who you are, you know who you are not. You are more than enough. Be comfortable in your own skin. When opponents try to move us out of the way, we move forward and win. Own your vote. Election day is around the corner.

When we stand strong together making a difference, making a change in each other lives, we become powerful and win. According to Fannie Lou Hamer, "Whether you have a PhD, DD, or no D, we're in the bag together. Whether you are from Morehouse or no house, we're still in this bag together."

I propose that you get involved.

I am honored I was chosen to receive an invitation to listen in on a Zoom call with Oprah, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Derrick Johnson, and many others on September 24, 2020 and October 26, 2020 - October 29, 2020. I believe it especially important to meet people where they are; therefore, when you work your plan, write the vision. Without a vision you perish. Get

involved and go to <http://ownyourvote.tv/> or <https://zoomwithoprah.com/>. As John Lewis would say, “Get in the way, to get in trouble. Good trouble, necessary trouble.”

It is now your move. The greatest honor history can give us is peace. Many among us need peace. Peace in your home. Peace in your marriage. Peace in your mind. Peace in your community. Peace be still.

Now is the time for us to make our move and own our vote. Let’s tap into accountability. When you stand strong, you stand with integrity, speak with authority and fight with endurance. Now is the time for you to speak up. Speak out! Share your concerns. Arise and shine. You are the investment. Continue to make yourself valuable by using your voice and your vote. Continue to read, research, and give back. Each time you do, you are investing in yourself.

We must demand change. We need America to continue to come together. Have you ever stopped to think what this historical statement will do for you? Let’s eagerly move forward together by speaking what we know and by learning about other communities, experiences, and histories. When we stand strong together making a difference, making a change in each other lives, we become powerful. Whatever you say will make a difference in someone’s life. When you speak you add value to others.

In conclusion, I hope you pray for understanding. We the people in the United States do not need division. We need togetherness. We need love, joy, and peace. We don’t need violence or lawlessness. We need understanding and justice.

I hope you pray for wisdom. When you pray for wisdom, do not waver like the sea. Pray for justice for all who abide in the land of the living. Are your ears awake? Stand strong and *vote*. We are here to fight for justice for the soul of our country. I have endorsed the Biden-Harris ticket. I hope you will too.

I am reluctant to suggest what I am going to say. I am more afraid of the one who gave me the message for you. Can we stand strong together and have a moment of silence for those who lost their loved ones? Listen to the words on the wind, the spirit of truth blowing through the trumpets, piercing through trees planted by life-giving streams of water. You are his symphony, masterpiece, and beautiful work of art. Stand strong, vote, and thrive.



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