

**JIM COSTA**

16TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

LIVESTOCK AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE

RANKING MEMBER

SUBCOMMITTEE ON

BIOTECHNOLOGY, HORTICULTURE AND RESEARCH

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The recent acts of religious violence in Pittsburgh and explosive devices sent to political figures are abhorrent, un-American, and demand an appropriate response — one that aims to bridge the ever-increasing divides that are fracturing American society. Numerous studies have shown an increase in partisan polarization,<sup>1</sup> and our nation seems to be further stratifying on ideological grounds.<sup>2</sup> In the minds of many, America is at a crossroads, with one path leading to healing wounds and nurturing the common bonds that we share as a country, and another leading to fostering discontent and further fracturing the values upon which our nation was founded. I believe that these reprehensible acts of violence provide an opportunity for a renewed commitment to American values and civility, and I urge you to work towards that end.

Specifically, I think you should hold a summit to create a national dialogue, bringing together religious leaders of the diverse faiths that nurture American spirituality, law enforcement and civil rights organizations, diverse political leaders of both parties, and leaders of groups charged with increasing civic engagement in American society. It is my hope that through this dialogue a national consensus can emerge, and policies can be developed to curb the increase in ideologically-driven violence in the United States.

I am reminded of the words of President Abraham Lincoln during his inauguration speech to the nation, "*A house divided against itself cannot stand.*"

Mr. President, we must work to reunite our country, and your position lends you a platform unlike any other to elevate this national dialogue. I am committed to working with you to curb these acts of violence and restore civility.

Sincerely,

JIM COSTA  
Member of Congress

<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center, October 2017, "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider."

<sup>2</sup> Iyengar S, Sood G, Lelkes Y. "Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 2012, 76: 405-431.