

## **Tips for talking about the president’s pardon of ex-Sheriff Joe Arpaio**

In 2011, the U.S. Justice Department sued then Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio for a “pattern of unlawful discrimination” against Latino Arizonans that included discriminatory and unjustified stops, searches, and detentions. As a result, a federal judge ordered him to stop these practices. Last month he was convicted of contempt of court for refusing to do so, opting instead to continue his harassment and intimidation of Latino Arizonans.

By pardoning him, the president sends a message that civil liberties are only for some, and that he is fine with law enforcement flouting the very laws they are meant to uphold. What’s more, on the heels of defending hateful demonstrators in Charlottesville, the president used his first official pardon to give impunity to a notorious violator of equal justice and our Constitution.

We recommend a two-pronged response to this news: 1) immediate condemnation of what Arpaio stands for: racism, racial profiling, and division – via a values lens; and 2) a pivot to the positive vision we have for a country that rejects racial profiling and every other form of racism.

### **Condemn the Arpaio mindset by describing the values at risk: equal justice, respect, safety, diversity. Frame the problem as a threat to these values.**

- ▶ Racial profiling harms all Americans. It violates the American value of equal justice that we all depend on. It disrespects and discriminates against millions of young people and others around the country. It threatens public safety and can ruin people’s lives. It’s time to end racial profiling and focus law enforcement on evidence and public safety.
- ▶ We need to be clear: it is unacceptable for those who enforce our laws to stereotype people based on the color of their skin, religion, or nation of origin. Law enforcement should act on facts and evidence, not racial bias. If one group can be singled out based on race or ethnicity or religion, none of us will be safe to enjoy the rights that the United States stands for.
- ▶ We are stronger when we find ways to encourage participation and contribution, not ways to divide, exclude and discriminate. We have to condemn, in the strongest terms, those who engage in and encourage racist tactics.
- ▶ Is it right for a mother of Asian or Latino background who speaks with an accent to get asked for her papers—right in front of her children—when her white friend next to her does not? Is it right for a military veteran to be asked for his papers just because he’s of Mexican heritage? Is it right that immigrants who work hard and aspire to be citizens live in daily fear of being stopped, arrested, and deported away from their loved ones? Is it right to create a culture of suspicion in an America that becomes more diverse every day? No. Anyone who engages in or encourages discrimination is flat out wrong. That’s not who we are as a country.

## **Remind audiences that President Trump's pardon of Arpaio reinforces a pattern of bigotry and discrimination in the wake of Charlottesville and long before.**

- ▶ President Trump's pardon of Arpaio doubles down on his defense of bigotry and discrimination in the wake of the Charlottesville hate march and Heather Heyer's killing.
- ▶ The President's pardon of Arpaio's unconstitutional discrimination, his defense of hate mongers in Charlottesville, and his ban on transgender Americans serving our country are part of an unacceptable pattern of bigotry in his rhetoric, among his advisors like Stephen Miller and Kris Kobach, and in policies like the Muslim ban and the undermining of voting rights.
- ▶ People of good will, particularly in our government, must go beyond rejection or condemnation of the president's words and deeds, and take action within the full limits of the Constitution to prevent him from inflicting greater discrimination, division, and harm.

## **Counter the Trump/Arpaio mindset with a vivid picture of what our country looks like when we work together and replace that suspicion with respect and cooperation.**

- ▶ We are better, as people and as a country, when we welcome our neighbors, care for each other, and help those in need. We are better when we embrace our differences.
- ▶ We are stronger when we work together and when we learn from each other's experiences, united as Americans. When people from different backgrounds join together, we all benefit from the diversity of those perspectives. It helps us find new ways to deal with old challenges. But we are not taking full advantage of this source of strength.
- ▶ Our country is changing, getting more and more diverse. It might make some of us uncomfortable, but it is our reality and a constant throughout our history. Politicians play on this fear, trying to divide us. They push unwise and divisive ideas like sending federal troops to police our cities, building a border wall, or singling out Muslim Americans because of their religion. If we take the bait on this, it makes our country weaker, not stronger. Our nation is stronger when every one of us can contribute and share ideas, and when everyone's basic rights and dignity are respected. We need to embrace ideas that unify us as a diverse people and make our country stronger, and we need to speak out against discrimination wherever we see it.