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For Immediate Release

Contact: Kellie P. Easton, President/CEO

C: 336.891.0683

E: action4equityws@gmail.com

Statement of Support of In Opposition to the Politics of Retreat

A4E stands in solidarity with the People's Power Coalition in its opposition to NC State House Bills 187, 188, and 551. While distinct in scope, each of these bills share one thing in common: they are examples of the *politics of retreat*, as communities like ours strive together to build equity, inclusion, and opportunity for all and especially for those who have historically been left out of the equation of prosperity. **We won't go back!**

HB 188 is a reactionary policy that is being promoted by those who are unwilling to accept that rules without relationship breeds rebellion and that we cannot police our way to peace in our schools. Social emotional learning works. Trauma-informed practices work. Restorative practices work. Peace circles work.

Exclusionary discipline does not work, and it reinforces patterns of dysfunction that harm our children. Action4Equity is dedicated to ending exclusionary discipline, collapsing the school-to-prison pipeline, and creating safe schools by using the proven tactics of embedded mentoring and restorative justice.

A4E also rejects HB 187 and the dog whistle of "anti-CRT" that it embodies. Telling the truth about United States history **is not controversial**, and censoring this truth in deference to the politics of white fragility will only doom us to repeat the mistakes of the past. Instead of resisting the truth through the politics of fear, we need to accept the truth, embrace the truth, learn from the truth, and build a brighter tomorrow.

A4E's analysis of the challenges facing our children is guided by the Center for Disease Control's Whole School Whole Child Whole Community agenda, and this framework makes clear that housing insecurity is one of the primary factors that creates instability in the lives of our young people. The **rent is too damn high**, and it's only getting higher. Instead of seeking solutions to the need for more affordable housing, legislators in Raleigh are trying to crush the emerging momentum for rent regulations - a policy which has been an effective means of protecting (and even creating) affordable housing in large metropolitan areas **for years**. Why? Apparently, because they are more concerned about the interests of large real estate developers than they are about the interests of poor and low-wealth families. **Shame!!**

In the face of persistent senseless violence in our communities, we need to press ahead with the solutions that will make peace and embrace the practices that can heal our communities and make them whole. We call on the NC legislature to discard the politics of retreat and prioritize the people and communities who need the most support and the most care. Our commitment should be to *their* best interests. We can do more together than we ever will apart.



Addition after Supreme Court ruling on Affirmative Action:

We condemn the Supreme Court's decision to restrict colleges and universities from considering race in admissions decisions, and we stand united with accomplices across the nation in denouncing this backward step. It is an affront to justice and undermines our relentless pursuit of a more equitable society. For far too long, people of color and those with low wealth have been systematically denied opportunities, often intentionally. We firmly assert that race must be a crucial consideration to achieve genuine equity in education and foster thriving communities. *This regressive ruling attempts to curtail our collective power to build a nation rooted in justice and equality.* **We will not be deterred.** We will continue to fight tirelessly for racial equity and dismantle the systems that were designed to perpetuate disparities since the very founding of our country. Together, we will build **new systems** designed to forge a future where justice prevails and all individuals can thrive without the shackles of systemic discrimination.

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