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Project Civil Discourse  
Attn: Barbara J. Sutton  
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to support the efforts of Project Civil Discourse.

Our blueprint for personal freedom and the hallmark of an open society, the First Amendment protects freedom of speech, press, religion, *the right to a peaceful assembly* and *the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances*. Without the First Amendment, religious minorities could be persecuted, the government could crush religious expression, protesters could be silenced, the press *or citizens* could fear to openly criticize government, and citizens could not freely mobilize for social change.

Justice William Brennan wrote in *New York Times v. Sullivan* in 1964, The First Amendment provides that "debate on public issues...(should be)...uninhibited, robust, and wide-open." It is my strong belief that such discussions should be undertaken with civility, courtesy and respect for opposing opinions.

It is equally important that citizens should be honestly and openly informed about issues that can have extreme impact on their lives and the lives of generations to come.

I commend your organization for your efforts to conduct these discussions in a way that informs the public while honoring each individual's dignity and right to question. This process also exhibits respect for the memory of those men who, so long ago, with wisdom and foresight, drafted the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, documents that have stood the test of time, and are unique in all of history.

Most sincerely,

TRENT FRANKS  
United States Congress