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October 28, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
204 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

ADL applauds the U.S. House of Representatives for recognizing and repudiating the threat that the QAnon movement poses to democratic institutions and to our shared effort to ensure progress toward justice and fair treatment for all. With the overwhelmingly bipartisan support that we expect for such a measure, the House adopted H. Res. 1154 on October 2, 2020, emphasizing that “QAnon conspiracy theories are fanning the flames [of] anti-Semitism”; “likely motivate some domestic extremists, wholly or in part, to engage in criminal or violent activity”; and “undermine trust in America’s democratic institutions, encourage rejection of objective reality, and deepen our Nation’s political polarization.” This constituted an important first step in preventing QAnon from taking root within the federal government. I respectfully submit that the House now must follow its resolution regarding the danger posed by QAnon through to its logical conclusion. I therefore write to urge you to take note of any Members of the 117th Congress who have endorsed, given credence to or intentionally promoted QAnon content, to remove them from the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference, and to decline to assign them to Congressional committees.

I do not make this recommendation lightly. I recognize that there may be many significant issues on which ADL and a Member of Congress might disagree – and these do not and should not merit limiting the reach and power of those members. However, when it comes to QAnon adherents, as the House Resolution indicates, we are aligned and beyond substantive disagreements. Despite a profound lack of any supporting evidence for its

views, QAnon has been creeping from the paranoid catacombs of online subculture into some segments of America's mainstream. As the QAnon ideology has gained a wider audience, it has attracted a following of private citizens, rapacious grifters and now even some national politicians, as well as considerable support within other extremist movements, particularly the anti-government and self-named private militia/paramilitary movements.

While ADL does not assert that all QAnon adherents are inherently extremists, this is a dangerous conspiracy theory movement that has inspired supporters on a number of occasions to commit acts of murder, kidnapping, as well as other violence and public disturbances. As you know, several aspects of QAnon's shared tenets mirror longstanding antisemitic tropes, including the belief in a "cabal" that conducts ritual acts of child sacrifice, akin to the conspiracy theory of "blood libel" that throughout history has resulted in lethal accusations of Jews murdering Christian children for ritualistic purposes. QAnon's focus on demonizing George Soros and "global bankers" and blaming them for virtually all evils, real and imagined, likewise carries undisguised antisemitic undertones.

Congress make it clear that adherents of conspiracy theories that undermine democratic institutions and spread such virulent disinformation have no place in seats of influence on Capitol Hill. Since membership in the House Democratic Caucus and the House Republican Conference signals acceptance by colleagues and ensures Members of Congress an amplified voice in setting the legislative and messaging agendas of the most important coalitions in the institution, denying this opportunity to QAnon adherents would appropriately limit their influence on governance. Similarly, those who adhere to QAnon's extreme and dangerous positions should not benefit from Congressional committee assignments that function as an impactful recognition of Members' particular expertise and a delegation of responsibility for leading Congress' work on selected topics of great import.

While the Members are free to continue to express those ideas both publicly and privately, Congress need not and should not raise and amplify those Members and ideas, or provide those Members with positions of particular influence and power. These opportunities are a valuable commodity that Congressional leadership must not extend to any Member who has endorsed, given credence to or intentionally promoted QAnon's conspiracy theories, and who cannot therefore commit to respecting the foundational values and principles upon which our system of government rests. Such action is in line with steps that have been taken in Congress before when Members espouse dangerous extremist views that foster violence and bigotry. Indeed, Congressional leaders previously have recognized withholding committee positions as a necessary and appropriate response to a Member's embrace of extremist credos when, for example, Congressman Steve King was removed from the Judiciary and Agriculture Committees in 2019 after publicly suggesting that white nationalism and white supremacy should not be considered offensive.

I know that you share ADL's commitment to the eradication of extremism, antisemitism and all forms of bigotry. You can reinforce this in a dramatic way by removing from the House Democratic Caucus and House Republican Conference, and by declining to extend committee assignments to, Members who have endorsed, given credence to or intentionally promoted QAnon

content. Such a decisive and meaningful action will make clear that the U.S. House of Representatives will not allow division to take hold under the banner of such conspiratorial belief systems. Silence and inaction in the face of such unacceptable conduct allows the conspiracy to grow unchallenged.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Greenblatt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan A. Greenblatt
CEO and National Director