

Charlottesville

By Speaker Paul Ryan

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<http://spkrryan.us/2fYAXyX>

I was struck by the tone Heather Heyer's parents took at her memorial service. Here they are suddenly grieving and saying goodbye to their daughter, taken by an act of domestic terrorism. And instead of turning to anger, they call for healing and forgiveness. They set a powerful example.

When this all happened last Saturday, I was in the mountains with my family. Our annual camping trip is the kind of time away we really cherish these days. Of course, the escape was short-lived, jolted back to reality by what happened in Charlottesville.

I felt the range of emotions that so many of us did. Anger, bewilderment, sadness. [As I said then, the views that fueled this spectacle are repugnant.](#) My hope was that the nation would unite in opposition to this bigotry.

The immediate condemnations from left, right, and center affirmed that **there is no confusion about right and wrong here. There are no sides. There is no other argument. We will not tolerate this hateful ideology in our society.**

I still firmly believe this hate exists only on the fringes. But so long as it exists, we need to talk about it. We need to call it what it is. And so long as it is weaponized for fear and terror, we need to confront it and defeat it.

That is why we all need to make clear there is no moral relativism when it comes to neo-Nazis. We cannot allow the slightest ambiguity on such a fundamental question.

If America stands for anything, it is the idea that the condition of your birth doesn't affect the outcome of your life. **The notion that anyone is intrinsically superior to anyone else runs completely counter to our founding principles.** Those principles make America special. They by no means make us perfect. We may never fully eradicate this scourge. After all, this republic is defined by its often winding pursuit of a more perfect union.

But it is that chase that sets us apart. It is the notion we are always trying to be better. This goes especially for our leaders. Those of us entrusted with the privilege to serve and represent the American people have an obligation to challenge us to push beyond the passions of the moment.

So this is not a legislative issue. And it certainly isn't a political one. Let's not just reduce

this to one of the partisan squabbles of the day. It is so much bigger than all that.

This is a test of our moral clarity. The words we use and the attitudes we carry matter. Yes, this has been a disheartening setback in our fight to eliminate hate. But it is not the end of the story. We can and must do better. We owe it to Heather Heyer, and to all our children.

I look forward to talking more about this tonight at [my CNN town hall](#) in Racine, Wisconsin.