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A New Year, But the Challenges Continue to Escalate

2020 was an awful year, full of tragedies new and very old. A deadly and economically devastating pandemic ravaged a country with rapidly-eroding democratic norms, amidst outbursts of police violence typical of a country and its institutions that have long devalued the lives of Black people.

In many ways, yesterday's upheaval (both the violent insurrection at the Capitol and non-violent but equally horrifying and brazen attempts to overturn a democratic election) was the culmination of everything in 2020 we wanted to move past. We wondered whether our democracy would survive. We saw large segments of the population support actions or believe in versions of reality that seem incomprehensible to many of us. We witnessed what "law and order" seems to mean in this country: white protesters with Trump or Confederate flags being allowed to roam and vandalize the Capitol, peacefully escorted away—in most cases without violence or arrest—all mere months after predominantly peaceful Black Lives Matter protesters were beaten, pepper-sprayed, and arrested. We watched it all helplessly from (if we're fortunate) the homes we rarely leave, and when we do, only at our own peril and the peril of our loved ones.

As a law firm, we have not always commented on days like yesterday. As a law firm that exclusively serves the non-profit sector and with many clients that are enmeshed in these issues, however, we feel the need to express both our horror and our gratitude. The horror speaks for itself. We'll try to focus on our gratitude.

We are thankful that we are able to continue to serve non-profit organizations that continue to fight the good fight, even under great economic strain. We are thankful for the organizations fighting to protect the right to vote, and especially those that have spent years trying to strengthen democracy in Georgia, efforts that bore fruit in the form of an amazing get-out-the-vote effort and historic election results. We are thankful for the organizations opposing systemic racism in all of its forms, including police violence. We are thankful for the organizations fighting for robust journalism and against disinformation. We are thankful for the organizations funding or leading the fight against COVID-19 and for the health of the most vulnerable. And we are thankful for so many more of our clients who contribute in many different ways to the shared project of achieving progress against all obstacles.

Some might describe that project as defending and restoring American values. Others might focus on overcoming challenges America has long faced and moving towards a more equitable and democratic future. At least as to yesterday, we are all unified in the belief that it was a dark day and that we hope for better in the future.

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Nonprofit Law Matters looks at legal issues in the nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations world. Written by the attorneys and paralegals of Adler & Colvin, it provides updates and analysis regarding philanthropy, charity, and other exempt organization issues.

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As always, we consider ourselves privileged to serve non-profit organizations and look forward to sharing that better future with them. It can't come soon enough.