



Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated

February 8, 2026

Subject: An Open Letter: Dignity Is Not Debatable

Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated unequivocally condemns the depiction of former President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama as apes.

This imagery is not “humor,” “political commentary,” or “just someone’s opinion.” It is a racist trope with a long and painful history, used to dehumanize Black people and make disrespect feel normal. And dehumanization, no matter who it targets, has no place in a society that claims to value decency and equal dignity.

As mothers, we understand something simple and sacred: what our children witness, they learn. What society excuses, it repeats. And when dehumanization is allowed to stand, it doesn’t stay contained. It spreads. As mothers charged with setting the example of citizenship for our children, we are compelled to speak.

Let us be clear about who we are and what we believe. Jack and Jill of America was founded to nurture African American children, strengthen families, and develop leaders through service and civic engagement. That mission requires us to speak when human dignity is attacked, because dignity is the foundation of citizenship. We can disagree about policies and politics in a democracy, but we do not get to disagree about someone’s humanity.

Let’s be clear: this statement is not partisan. It is moral. It reflects our responsibility to model citizenship rooted in character, truth, and respect. We can debate policy and politics without ever debating someone’s humanity.

It also serves as firsthand proof that diversity, equity, and inclusion work is not optional, and it is not “extra.” It is vital. When those in power express bias openly and without restraint, DEI is one of the guardrails that helps our schools, workplaces, and all institutions of life and civic spaces remain anchored in fairness, accountability, respect and equal dignity.

We call on our members and our broader communities to denounce racism in all its forms, reject dehumanizing rhetoric and imagery, and insist on decency as a minimum standard, not an aspiration. We must uphold the principles of dignity and humanity that bind us together and reject the normalization of harm against those that look different from ourselves. As people of faith and conscience, we hold to the truth that every person is created in the image of God and deserves to be treated accordingly.

Jack and Jill of America, Incorporated remains committed and will continue to advocate for a world where our children, and all children, are seen as fully human, treated with dignity, and equipped to lead with courage, compassion, and conviction.

With purpose and resolve,

National Leadership