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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Official Press Statement:**

### **One Nation Indivisible with Liberty and Justice for All**

**DETROIT** – One hundred forty-seven years ago on July 9, 1868, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution was adopted as one of the Reconstruction Amendments. The first section includes several clauses; among them [citizenship clause and the equal protection clause]. Today in the city of Columbia, South Carolina, after many years of struggle, blood, sweat, tears and sacrifice, a symbol standing on some of the bloodiest pages in the history book of our nation has at last been brought down.

For a nation that continues to wrestle with a checkered history marked by periods of enslavement, black codes, Jim Crow, Jim Crow Esquire, segregation and discrimination, a great dent has been made in the tarnished armor of those whose minds have not been stayed on freedom. The NAACP, for the past 15 years, has waged an economic boycott against the State of South Carolina along with other organizations, over the use of the Confederate Flag. It is this flag that has served as a symbol of the worst in our nation's history.

Today marks a step in the direction not just for symbolism, but more importantly for substance. If we can take down the negative symbols of feelings and emotions that divide us, perhaps we can move to the substance of raising up policies that can unite us. More important than just symbolism, is of course real substance. Now, action must be taken in order to eradicate what the symbol actually means in the obstruction of progress in our nation.

It was indeed a marvelous thing to observe. On the floor of the House of the South Carolina Senate, son of the late segregationist U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond, Mr. Paul Reynolds Thurmond along with colleague House Representative Jenny Horne, a descendent of the late President of the Southern Confederacy, Jefferson Davis, both broke ranks with their ancestors in declaring that the flag must come down.

Herein lies a message to all of us who believe in freedom, justice and equality. We celebrate this day along with all of those who remember the ultimate sacrifice of the martyrs. The nine people of God, of the Mother Emmanuel A.M.E. Church must never be forgotten. We are still challenged to fight the battles to make certain that as the flags come down, stagnate policies that both separate and limit many of us, do not remain up.

In the words of Jefferson Davis: *“to one who loves his country and all its part, it is natural to rejoice in whatever contributes to the prosperity and honor and marks the stability and progress of any portion of its people.”* Although unintended for African Americans when originally written, I know of no more appropriate time than the present, to use what was intended to keep us down, as a lever now to lift us up.

*The Detroit Branch NAACP is the largest branch in the Association. For more information please call (313) 871-2087.*

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