

Conclusion

BY CARL CHANCELLOR



America is, has always been, and will always be a work in progress. From the beginnings of this great and unprecedented experiment in democracy, our founders, despite the contradictions in their own lives and the flawed realities of the day, let their aspirations soar, imagining into being a nation of boundless opportunity. They set forth a vision of a country where liberty and equality reign supreme, an America characterized by shared prosperity and guided by the principle *e pluri bus unum*—“out of many, one.”

Yet while diversity is at the bedrock of our nation, the embrace of this notion has been a constant struggle. One hundred and fifty years ago with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in the rebelling states, America took its first halting steps toward fulfilling the promise of an All-In Nation. Since then the road to that destination has been twisting and rocky, with mile markers both painful and glorious.

Today we find ourselves again at a crossroads facing a demographic shift that challenges us anew to live up to the nation’s founding principles. America is rocketing toward a new reality where the majority of its people will be of color. We must choose which path to take. We can give into fears, prejudices, and petty self-interests. We can shut our eyes and close our minds to this change—though doing so will do nothing to halt the inevitable. Or we can see this change for what it is—a rare and precious gift—and

recognize this diversity as our greatest and most enduring strength.

In the preceding pages the case has been made that America’s future vitality and preeminence in the world rests entirely on our ability to become an All-In Nation. In this land of many races, cultures, religious traditions, ages, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations, coming together in the pursuit of a shared destiny is an imperative. Allowing any segment of our population to be left out and left behind is simply not an option.

Achieving an All-In Nation means pursuing an equity agenda—just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can fully participate and prosper. It means advancing equity in our education and justice systems so that all children can realize their dreams and fulfill their potential, and where the color of one’s skin doesn’t fate them to a life of lack on society’s fringes. It means creating places where people can get healthy and stay healthy. It means crafting equity in immigration and civic participation that provides a path to citizenship and eliminates obstacles to full democratic involvement. It means building an equitable economy with good, family-supporting jobs, wealth-building opportunities, and pathways to entrepreneurship.

At the 1964 Democratic National Convention, civil rights champion Fannie Lou Hamer shined a spotlight on the nation’s efforts to suppress the voting rights of millions of African Americans, saying

“I question America—is this America? The land of the free and the home of the brave?” Despite undeniable progress in the nation, this question remains an urgent call today.

As we seek to form a more perfect union, we must recognize that we are all in this together. The challenges our nation faces today—significant disparities, diminishing global economic status, and inequality—are great. The agenda described in this book to create an All-In Nation is robust, ambitious, and completely achievable, if we work together to advance an equity agenda. Now more than ever, in the words of Ms. Hamer, “It’s time for America to get right.” Let us be inspired by those words and commit to moving forward together to achieve an America that works for all. ■



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