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COMMENTARY: Biden-Harris Administration Tasked with Dismantling America's History of Hate*By Stacy M. Brown, NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent @StacyBrownMedia*

A lot of past cruelties can underscore America's history of hate. Today, one could capture that hate through the lens of at least some of the more than 74 million people casting a vote for President Donald Trump. Often described as a racist, chauvinist, and one whose policies separated immigrant children from their parents and put them in cages along the Southern U.S. border, Trump supposedly embodies the very qualities that much of America — including many of its major corporations and our next-door neighbors — protested against when they stood with Black Lives Matter demonstrators. Yet, he received the second-highest vote count of any presidential candidate in history.

Even now, Trump and his campaign have specifically sought to have officials toss out many of the votes that were legitimately cast in heavily African American-populated cities like Atlanta, Detroit, and Milwaukee. Ironically, their actions would include disenfranchising thousands of Republicans whose votes were also submitted by other means than in person at a polling place.

In the specific instance of the effect on the Black vote, seeking ways to deny African American voters our Constitutional right to make our voice known at the ballot box is a tactic used since, during, and after Reconstruction. African Americans have not been alone on the receiving end of our nation's history of hate-driven actions.

"The history of the United States over the past 200 years has been largely a struggle to define who might enjoy the rights and privileges of full citizenship," offered Sarah Silkey, a professor of History at Lycoming College in Williamsport, Penn.

"Each successive gain made in broadening the definition of American citizenship was quickly followed by a backlash. Jim Crow segregation, the convict lease system, redlining, the war on drugs, and other systems created to maintain white supremacy denied access to full citizenship for generations of Americans," Silkey wrote in an email.

"By defining personal success solely as a product of individual initiative and effort, the popular myth of

the American Dream served to reinforce white privilege, perpetuate damaging racial stereotypes, and absolve white politicians from responsibility for dismantling entrenched systems of inequality," she added. "The crises of 2020 exposed vast inequities of health, wealth, safety, and political access to a broader cross-section of the American public. That growing public awareness of systemic inequalities has created an opportunity for the next administration to enact meaningful change," Silkey concluded.

As American families prepare for another Thanksgiving, many are left to ponder just what they should celebrate. "The US was built on powerful myths of equal opportunity in the pursuit of happiness and the city on a shining hill. The reality was less uplifting," observed Nora V. Demleitner, a Roy L. Steinheimer Jr. Professor of Law at Washington and Lee University in Lexington City, Va. "Racism, racial exclusion of immigrants, and the vilification of ethnic and religious groups have long been an integral part of US history," Demleitner posited.

"There has been substantial progress in the creation and enforcement of civil rights for all especially during the civil rights era, yet it has been uneven, and rising economic inequality and the impact of climate change threaten to undermine some of that progress."

The playbooks of racial and ethnic vilification were never entirely discarded. They are coming back as seen in the demand for "law and order," widespread suppression of minority voters, and unwillingness to invest in infrastructure and education to support all, Demleitner offered further.

Tim Powell, a University of Chicago journalism master's student, discards the myth of an America that welcomes labeling as a melting pot. "Consider that the colonists left England to rebel against religion, and when they arrived here, we had a colony of rebels to some degree," Powell relayed.

"The administrations can only do so much to counter the inherent unacceptance of races by a white, male American. It will be up to the next generations that will determine the acceptance of differences." "The best administrations will be those that do not stoke division.

"Look at McCarthyism as an example of the people demanding we rid America of 'communists.' It was not McCarthy himself, but the people demanding it. Without a market, a leader of a campaign — like Trump's immorality — the leader has no followers."

BLACK LIVES MATTER