



**Resolution of the KI Social Justice Policy Task Force
To Condemn Anti-Semitism and Hate Crimes
March 9, 2017**

George Washington wrote in 1790 to the members of the Touro Synagogue in Rhode Island, "... the Government of the United States ... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance... ."

America's foundational documents, civil rights legislation and crimes codes safeguard the rights of citizens and residents of our country against conduct based on prejudice and hatred.

Congress passed the first federal civil rights law in 1866; it guaranteed the "full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property" to all citizens.

Since then, lawmakers through a chain of legislation enacted at federal, state and local levels have assigned criminal penalties for actions that injure or seek to injure individuals or deny them their civil rights based on their race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Also, actions that vandalize, deface or desecrate cemeteries and synagogues, mosques, churches, and other places of worship are crimes under the laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Regrettably, at this moment in our history, hate is resurgent. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that the number of hate groups in the United States rose for the second consecutive year in 2016. And the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program data released in November of 2016 showed an overall increase in hate crimes reported in 2015, especially against Muslims.¹

Already in 2017, arsonists attacked mosques in Victoria, Texas and Tampa, Florida; vandals desecrated Jewish cemeteries in Saint Louis, Missouri; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Rochester, New York; and more than 100 bomb threats were called in to Jewish Community Centers across 33 states forcing the evacuation of children and seniors.² An Indian engineer was shot to death and another injured, in

¹ It showed 5,850 hate crime incidents reported to police in 2015, a 6.8% increase from the 5,479 incidents reported in 2014. Anti-Jewish hate crimes increased by 9%. Anti-Muslim hate crimes spiked up by 67%.

² Levenson, E., & Stapleton, A. (2017, March 02). Jewish center bomb threats top 100; kids pulled from schools. Retrieved March 06, 2017, from <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/28/us/bomb-threats-jewish-centers-jcc/>

Olathe, Kansas. The gunman shouted, "Get out of my country," before he opened fire. A third man was also injured when he tried to intervene.

On *Yom HaShoah* in 2014, in remarks at the Anti-Defamation League Leadership Summit, FBI Director James B. Comey noted that hate crimes unlike other crimes "strike at the heart of one's identity – they strike at our sense of self, our sense of belonging. The end result is loss – loss of trust, loss of dignity, and in the worst case, loss of life. Hate crimes impact not just individuals, but entire communities."

We stand with our community to send a clear message, that we will not tolerate this kind of bigotry or accept the fear and fracturing within our society that it is designed to achieve.

With the shocking surge in acts of violence, intimidation and hate across our communities, we call on law enforcement officials at the federal, state and local levels to conduct intensive investigations promptly, to find the people responsible for these deplorable acts, and to prosecute them to the fullest extent that the law permits.

We encourage our elected representatives including Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, State Attorney General Josh Shapiro, Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey, Vice President Mike Pence, and President Donald Trump, who have condemned the violence, to use all the power and influence of their offices to ensure these investigations continue without denial, interference, or delay.

We invite our congregants, members of other faith communities, and neighbors to join us as we raise our voices in outrage at these attacks through statements such as our own, and through emails or letters to elected officials. All of us must be vigilant to protect our own safety and the basic American values that have made us "one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."