

**UPDATED SIGNATURE  
LIST: JULY 14, 2020**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Barnstable No Place For Hate: A Call To Action**

**Hyannis, MA, June 4, 2020**— The Barnstable No Place for Hate steering committee, with clergy and representatives from people of all faith and backgrounds, call for our leaders and representatives in Massachusetts to address issues of racial injustice and bigotry embodied in our state services and healthcare systems. Most of these injustices are not unique to the pandemic. However, the pandemic has pulled back the curtain and laid bare the systemic and cultural weaknesses of our society. The impact of the pandemic has been inordinately skewed, hitting at risk populations, the elderly and minorities much harder than the more privileged parts of our society. The true measure of a free society is not how well the well-off do, but how well its most fragile members of society are cared for. We believe we can do better than we have. We believe all members of our community should be afforded the privilege of high-quality healthcare befitting a country as wealthy as ours.

In response to a call for protective masks in public, a man wears a Ku Klux Klan hood to a supermarket in California. COVID-19 shutdown protesters in Ohio carry signs portraying Jews as rats. In Michigan, heavily armed men carry nooses, Confederate flags and swastikas to the statehouse. American gun purchases top four million sales in March and April in the face of calls to care for our neighbors and our nation by curbing our own work and travel. Sixty percent of Asian Americans have seen Asian people being blamed for the coronavirus.

Well beyond politicizing our response to a virus that unchecked could kill millions, many Americans are whipping up the old and deep-seated hatred and violence that we seek to check. Meanwhile, the reality of COVID-19 deaths mirrors the differential health outcomes that we have known for a century. Black and brown people are much more likely to die than white people for reasons of both bias in medical care and the economic inequality grounded in endemic racism. The most vulnerable people in Massachusetts, including low-wage workers, immigrants, and the disabled, are at the greatest risk of death from the coronavirus.

Would that these issues were only at a national level. The same forces are present in our town of Barnstable. The most vulnerable suffer even as the necro-politics of who shall live and who shall die play out. We hold that every life is sacred and that from the youngest to the oldest person in our town, none should be regarded as “expendable” or “regrettable but necessary sacrifices” on the altar of economics.

We call on the residents of our town to join us as we remember those who are most at risk. We are in a time of shared sacrifice. We can best display our patriotism and civic-mindedness by adhering to the guidelines given by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health that keep us all safe.

We call on our leaders in State and local government and those who have the ability to change policy at both the State and local level to study the causes behind the inequities that have led to so many more deaths among African American, Latinx, Tribal and Elderly people. We ask that steps be taken to assure all people the dignity of quality treatment and care.

Now, at a time when people of color are disproportionately suffering illness and death from COVID-19, we are again confronted by another pandemic that has raged in our nation for four hundred years. From the first enslaved people, kidnapped from Africa and brought to our shores through a journey of pain and death, the careless disregard of Black lives has been constant in our American history and present. Through centuries of the cruelest bondage, a war to preserve the institution of race-based American slavery, the terrorism of the Jim Crow regimes, the bloody struggle for voting rights and legal equality, the never-ending discrimination in lending, employment opportunities, housing, medical treatment, and education; through it all our culture has both actively and silently condoned the oppression of African-Americans, and claimed ownership of Black bodies. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the grossly unequal, and too often violent, function of our criminal justice system.

The agonizing murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer as other sworn officers looked on and did nothing, months after the death of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, has touched off understandable rage and protests across our nation. We stand in solidarity with those who demand equality before the law, equal treatment throughout our society, and a day of truth telling and reckoning for our past and present. As Abraham Lincoln stated in his Second Inaugural Address:

Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

We love our country and our community by valuing our neighbors' lives and health through our respect for social distancing, hand washing and mask wearing protocols. We show our love for our nation and one another when we stand up to the baseless hatred that reopens like a wound barely scabbed over in these stressful times. We are so much stronger than those who hope to fan the glowing ember of our worst impulses into a wildfire. Barnstable is no place for hate.

Respectfully signed by members of the Barnstable No Place For Hate Steering Committee:

Gretchen Arvanitopoulos  
CORD, Cape Org. for Rights of the Disabled  
Nsreen Alkhatib  
Katia DaCunha  
Eileen Elias  
Rev. Dr. Kate Epperly  
Rabbi David Freelund, Cape Cod Synagogue  
Donna Giberti  
Pastor Peter Hébert, First Lutheran Church  
Wendy Lavenda-Carroll  
Chris Morin  
Ptl. Brian David Morrison, Barnstable Police Dept  
Jeanne Morrison  
Claire Reed

Nancy Thompson  
Paul Thompson  
Rev. Dr. Kristen Harper  
Rev. Dr. Libby Gibson Catania  
St. Mary's Episcopal Church  
Rev. Tony Cryer, Unity on Cape Cod  
Rev. Alonso DaCunha  
Brazilian Presbyterian Church  
John Reed, NAACP, Cape Cod Branch  
Lysetta Hurge-Putnam, Independence House, Inc.  
Bronwyn Howells Walsh, Editor, Barnstable Patriot  
Greg Masterson  
Diane Ross

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