

RESOLUTION NO. 17-176

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, DENOUNCING HATE, EXTREMISM AND BIGOTRY; SUPPORTING STEPS TO COMBAT HATE, EXTREMISM AND BIGOTRY; PROVIDING FOR DISTRIBUTION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the United States of America is a nation founded on principles of liberty and justice for all. We treasure our freedom, our commitment to equality, and our democratic values. These values are what has made America great for more than 241 years; and

WHEREAS, individual Americans can, and often do, agree to disagree with each other on issues large and small. Differences should be celebrated. And our freedom of speech and the other rights enshrined in the First Amendment are among our most cherished freedoms; and

WHEREAS, our diverse and pluralistic nation has endured and thrived for centuries because we have been able to reject the forces of extremism and bigotry that could tear us apart. This country has a long history of striving to be a more perfect union. In the face of challenges and division, we have stood together – Americans of different races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, nationalities, and political persuasions – and we have found ways to move forward; and

WHEREAS, for decades, many of America's elected officials have taken strong positions in support of civil rights and in opposition to racism and discrimination of all kinds. In the 54 years since the murder of Medgar Evers in Jackson, Mississippi, the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four young girls, and the March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., much progress has been made in addressing past grievances and in ensuring the civil and human rights of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, across the country, many elected officials have spoken out against discrimination and injustice when it has occurred and have undertaken efforts to build tolerance and understanding within their communities. In recent years, municipalities have undertaken efforts to integrate immigrants into their communities and have adopted a variety of policies to include fully and treat equitably their LGBT residents; and

WHEREAS, today, however, we are being challenged again. Dark forces of extremism and violent bigotry are rearing their ugly heads. We are now seeing efforts in our states and at the highest levels of our government to weaken existing civil rights policies and reduce their enforcement. We have seen an increase in hate based violence, xenophobic rhetoric, and discriminatory actions that target African Americans, Muslims, Jews, and other minorities. We will not permit them to succeed; and

WHEREAS, elected officials and their municipalities must continue to be a beacon for inclusion, tolerance, and respect for all. We will continue to create stronger cultures of kindness and compassion in our communities, and expect our federal and state partners to join us in this endeavor; and

WHEREAS, as elected officials, we must collectively take steps such as:

1. EXPRESSLY REJECTING EXTREMISM, WHITE SUPREMACY AND ALL FORMS OF BIGOTRY

Elected officials must use the bully pulpit to speak out against racism, extremism, xenophobia, homophobia, white supremacy and all forms of bigotry, and those who espouse such ideologies, and promote community conversations around these issues as needed.

2. DENOUNCING ALL ACTS OF HATE WHEREVER THEY OCCUR

Elected officials must publicly denounce specific acts of hate and support efforts to punish bias-motivated violence to the fullest extent of the law, and provide comfort and assistance to victims of hate crimes and discrimination.

3. ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY WHILE PROTECTING FREE SPEECH AND OTHER BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Elected officials must protect public safety while safeguarding free speech and other basic constitutional rights through the use of appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions. This might include encouraging alternative rally sites and placing limits on the rights of protestors to bring weapons to political rallies.

4. CALLING FOR FULLY-RESOURCED LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM AND HATE CRIMES

Elected officials must work to ensure that local police departments have the financial resources necessary to prevent, respond to and investigate domestic terrorism and hate crimes, and work with federal authorities when appropriate to ensure that the interests of justice are served.

5. ELEVATING AND PRIORITIZING ANTI-BIAS AND ANTI-HATE PROGRAMS IN OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS

Elected officials must encourage schools to implement anti-bias and anti-hate content in their curricula and/or through extra-curricular activities.

6. SUPPORTING TARGETED COMMUNITIES AND BRINGING TOGETHER CIVIC AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BUILD TRUST

Elected officials must reach out proactively to civil rights leaders, clergy and other community leaders to ensure that they are engaged and actively involved in efforts to build trust across neighborhood and community lines and minimize intergroup tensions.

7. CELEBRATING DIVERSITY, PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY AND CHALLENGING BIAS

Elected officials must support the integration of minorities, immigrants and other new residents into the community, encourage community activities which celebrate diversity and educate city residents about the different cultures that compose a city's population, and work with creative partners to use various electronic and print media outlets to promote public messages celebrating inclusivity and challenging bias. Mayors also must support training for local elected officials and business leaders to help combat institutionalized behaviors that reflect racism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia.

8. PROMOTING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ON RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING HATE INCIDENTS, HATE CRIMES AND DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Elected officials must encourage their police departments to participate in training programs that address how to identify and respond to hate incidents, hate crimes, and domestic terrorism. Elected officials must also encourage the collection of data on such crimes and the provision of the data to appropriate state authorities and the FBI in compliance with the Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act.

9. ENCOURAGING RESIDENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES TO REPORT HATE INCIDENTS AND HATE CRIMES, INCLUDING USING HOT LINES AND ONLINE TOOLS

Elected officials must encourage residents – both victims and witnesses – to report hate incidents and hate crimes to local authorities, and provide the tools necessary to facilitate such reporting, including hot lines and online tools, as possible and appropriate.

10. MAINTAINING CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT AND STRENGTHENING HATE CRIME LAWS WHEN NECESSARY

Elected officials must work with executive and legislative partners at the federal and state levels to assure that civil rights laws are aggressively enforced, existing hate crime laws are strengthened as needed, and new laws are enacted to ensure that all hate crimes are prosecutable in their jurisdictions to the greatest extent possible.

WHEREAS, the recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia, involving painful images of violence reflecting hate, extremism and bigotry, are repugnant to American ideals of freedom and justice; and

WHEREAS, the recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia, remind us that the dark forces of white supremacists and neo-nazism not only result in violence, injuries and deaths but cause intense pain to people and our country.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. The foregoing recitals are hereby ratified and incorporated as the legislative intent of this Resolution.

SECTION 2. The City Commission of the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, denounces and commits to combat and oppose hate, extremism and bigotry.

SECTION 3. The City Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of this Resolution to the Board of County Commissioners of Broward County, Florida, Governor Rick Scott, Sheriff Scott J. Israel, The School Board of Broward County, Florida, the City Commissions of all Broward County municipalities, the Broward County Legislative Delegation, the United States Congressional Delegation from the State of Florida, and the Florida League of Cities.

SECTION 4. That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this the 22nd day of August, 2017.



Mayor
JOHN P. "JACK" SEILER

ATTEST:



City Clerk
JEFFREY A. MODARELLI