

**DRAFT**

**Statement by the Alexandria City Council**

**November 29, 2016**

Alexandria, Virginia, is a city of kindness and compassion.

We are a thriving community of engaged residents with strong ideals of peace, community service, and both shared and diverse cultures.

Our city declares itself to be a hate-free zone. We are an accepting and embracing community where we treat each other with human dignity and respect. There is no place for intolerance in our community. This is a core value of our city.

In recent times, many of our neighbors, families and children have expressed fear and apprehension, and there has been an increase in hateful and dangerous speech and acts nationwide. Recognizing everyone's First Amendment right to freedom of speech, we are also dedicated to freedom from fear.

People of diverse culture, race, color, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and persons with disabilities live and work together in Alexandria and bring pride and prosperity to our community.

On behalf of the City of Alexandria, the Alexandria Human Rights Commission, and the people we serve, we reaffirm our responsibility to ensure that each person within our jurisdiction is accorded equal protection under the law, including the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the United States and the Virginia Constitution, and those set forth in the Alexandria Human Rights Code.

We proclaim that we remain committed to diversity and to fostering an atmosphere of inclusiveness that respects the dignity and worth of every person without regard to race, color, sex, religion, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or familial status, and we declare that we denounce hate speech, hate crimes, harassment, racial bias, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-immigrant activity, and harmful bias and discrimination in all forms.

Mayor Allison Silberberg  
Vice Mayor Justin Wilson  
Councilmember Willie F. Bailey Sr.  
Councilmember John T. Chapman  
Councilmember Timothy B. Lovain  
Councilmember Redella S. "Del" Pepper  
Councilmember Paul C. Smedberg