



A CALL FOR CIVILITY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

TO: Local political leaders and candidates for office
FROM: Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia

We, the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia believe that our democracy thrives when differing viewpoints can be exchanged with respect; when voices other than our own can be listened to, and heard. Robust, vigorous debate is a hallmark of a diverse society. A frank and civil exchange of ideas helps to inform our decisions and provoke new, constructive ways of addressing issues.

However, we live in a time when public discussion and discourse is often increasingly uncivil. As differences devolve into acrimony, dignity is diminished and people holding diverse viewpoints cease listening to each other. Particularly in an election season, these regrettable trends tend to be even more pronounced. It has become more difficult to find common ground.

We, as community leaders, have the responsibility to lead others by promoting and maintaining civility in discussions, including and especially those focused on public policy issues. Order relies on the integrity of all people and we, the members of the Religious Leaders Council of Greater Philadelphia, hold ourselves accountable for setting a positive example.

We ask and challenge those in political leadership to join us in this effort to choose the path that leads away from polarization and towards a unity of purpose that fosters a shared future. This will uphold the dignity of each person, created in the image of God, and our resolve to show respect and to do more good will be strengthened.

We call upon you, and all those seeking public office to support this by signing on as your show of commitment to carry out these valued principles of civility and mutual respect.

Co-Conveners:

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput - Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Bishop Claire Schenot Burkat - Southeastern PA Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
Imam Anwar Muhaimin - Quba Masjid
Rabbi David Straus - Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Phila.

Members:

Bishop Charles Bennison - Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania
Reverend Luis A. Cortés, Jr. - Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity
Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell - Delaware Valley Association of Reform Rabbis
Bijan Etemad, M.D. - Philadelphia Baha'i Community
Rabbi Albert E. Gabbai - Congregation Mikveh Israel
Rabbi Elisa Goldberg - Philadelphia Board of Rabbis
Reverend Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr. - Philadelphia Leadership Foundation
Rev. Terrence D. Griffith - Black Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity
Rabbi Richard Hirsh - Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Bishop Peter Hwang - Council of Korean Churches of Greater Philadelphia
Rabbi Alan Iser - Rabbinical Assembly, Philadelphia Region
Bishop Peggy Johnson - Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, The United Methodist Church
Lt Colonel Renee P. Lance - Salvation Army of Greater Philadelphia
Arthur M. Larrabee - Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Reverend Steven B. Lawrence - Metropolitan Christian Council of Philadelphia
Rev. Dr. Charles H. Lett Sr.- African Methodist Episcopal Church
Imam Muhammad Abdur-Razzaq Miller - Mosque of Shaikh M.R. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen
Father Emmanuel Pratsinakis - Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey
Imam Asim Abdur-Rashid - Majlis Ash-Shura of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley
Rev. Dr. Lucy Rupe - Presbytery of Philadelphia, Presbyterian Church USA
Imam Mohamed Shehata - Al-Aqsa Islamic Society
Elder Robert B. Smith - The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints
Archbishop Stefan Soroka - Archeparchy of Philadelphia
Rev. Judith Youngman - PA Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ
In Formation

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