

RESOLUTION 16-14

CONDEMNING VIOLENCE AND HATE SPEECH, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR AND SOLIDARITY WITH PROPERTY OWNERS & RENTERS THAT ARE MUSLIMS, ARABIC, ASIAN AMERICAN, AFRICAN AMERICAN, LATINO, WOMEN, IMMIGRANTS, DISABLED AND LGBTQIA, AND ALL THOSE TARGETED FOR THEIR ETHNICITY, RACE OR RELIGION.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Rent Stabilization Board of the City of Berkeley as follows:

WHEREAS, the United States was founded by immigrants, many fleeing religious persecution, who enshrined freedom of religion as one of our nation's fundamental legal and ethical principles; and

WHEREAS, the history of Islam in the United States began even before its founding when African Muslims were enslaved and brought to the Americas, where they later helped in numerous ways to build this country, including sacrificing their lives on the line in every major war from the Revolutionary War on; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 3 million Muslims living in the United States today, and approximately Alameda County is home to 37 percent of the approximately 250,000 Muslims living in the Bay Area — the largest population in the region (1), making invaluable contributions to our economy, our social and political life, and our culture; and

WHEREAS, there has been an unprecedented backlash since “9/11” in the form of hate crimes and employment discrimination toward Arab and Muslim Americans and those perceived as Muslims; and

WHEREAS, Arab and Muslim Americans, and those perceived as Muslims, are frequently the targets of abusive and discriminatory police practices sanctioned by the state including surveillance in their neighborhoods and places of worship; and

WHEREAS, we are saddened and outraged at the recent escalation of hateful rhetoric against Muslims, those perceived to be Muslims, immigrants, and all people of color, and we are particularly concerned to see political figures and elected government officials leading this escalation and using it in order to gain power; and

WHEREAS, in the face of extreme bigotry and violence, Muslim communities and their leaders are using the language and teachings of Islam to promote peace and justice and service, and their institutions are continuing to play an essential societal role providing charitable and humanitarian services to those in need; and

WHEREAS, we, as elected representatives of the people, have a special responsibility not to stay silent in the face of hate violence and discrimination against any of our constituents or countrymen:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board hereby:

- (1) Condemns all hateful speech and violent action directed at those who are Arabic, Muslim, Asian American, African American, Latino, women, immigrants, disabled and LGBTQIA; as well as those perceived to be part of these communities, and all who are targeted for race, religion or political affiliation;
- (2) Categorically rejects political tactics that use fear to manipulate voters or to gain power or influence;
- (3) Commits to pursuing a policy agenda that affirms civil and human rights, and ensures that those targeted on the basis of race, religion or immigration status can turn to government without fear of recrimination
- (4) Reaffirms the value of a pluralistic society, the beauty of a culture composed of multiple cultures, and the inalienable right of every person to live and practice their faith without fear.
- (5) Commits to fostering an environment that promotes respect for and curiosity about all religions and cultures, affirms the equal humanity of all members of the community, and rejects all forms of bullying and discrimination via rent board policies for both property owners and renters.

Dated: November 14, 2016

Adopted by the Rent Stabilization Board by the following vote:

YES: Chang, Hunt, Laverde-Levine, Selawsky, Shelton, Soto-Vigil, Townley

NO: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Dodsworth, Harr

Jesse Townley, Chairperson
Rent Stabilization Board

Attest: _____

Jay Kelekian
Executive Director