

SOUTH PORTLAND CITY COUNCIL
POSITION PAPER OF THE CITY CLERK

SUBJECT: Resolve #6-16/17 - RESOLUTION CONDEMNING VIOLENCE AND HATE SPEECH, EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH MUSLIMS AND ALL THOSE TARGETED FOR THEIR ETHNICITY, RACE OR RELIGION

POSITION:

At Mayor Smith's request, Resolve #6 is being brought forward for Council's consideration.

REQUESTED ACTION:

This item is in order for Council action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily A. Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E".



CITY OF SOUTH PORTLAND

PATRICIA SMITH
Mayor

DON GERRISH
Interim City Manager

EMILY F. SCULLY
City Clerk

SALLY J. DAGGETT
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry

**In Council
Resolve #6-16/17**

**RESOLUTION CONDEMNING VIOLENCE AND HATE
SPEECH, EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH MUSLIMS
AND ALL THOSE TARGETED FOR THEIR ETHNICITY, RACE
OR RELIGION**

District One
CLAUDE V. Z. MORGAN

District Two
PATRICIA SMITH

District Three
EBEN ROSE

District Four
LINDA C. COHEN

District Five
BRAD FOX

At Large
MAXINE BEECHER

At Large
SUSAN HENDERSON

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, including hundreds of our neighbors living in the City of South Portland, 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, we are saddened and outraged at the recent escalation of hateful rhetoric against our fellow residents who are Muslim, those perceived to be Muslim, asylum seekers, and immigrants, both nationally and locally, and we are particularly concerned to see political figures and elected government officials leading this escalation and exploiting people's fear of random acts of violence and terrorism in order to gain power; and

WHEREAS, in the face of extreme bigotry and violence, followers of Islam and their leaders are using the language and teachings of their faith to promote peace and justice and service, and their institutions are continuing to play an essential role in society 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; including foreign-born residents of South Portland who represent approximately 7% of the City of South Portland's population;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of South Portland, Maine:

- 1) Condemns all hateful speech and violent action directed at Muslims, those perceived to be Muslims, asylum seekers, and immigrants,
- 2) Categorically rejects political tactics that use fear to manipulate voters or to gain power or influence;
- 3) Reaffirms the value of a pluralistic society, the beauty of an American culture influenced by multiple cultures, and the inalienable right of every person to live and practice their faith without fear, and;
- 4) Commits to upholding a policy that affirms civil and human rights, and ensures that those targeted on the basis of race, religion or immigration status can turn to the government without fear of recrimination.

Fiscal Note: Less than \$1,000

Dated: February 6, 2017