

A Declaration of Policy About Human Dignity

by the Huntington Beach City Council

Huntington Beach is a city whose residents represent every walk of life, come from many nations, share varied lifestyles, and hold different religious beliefs. This diversity brings to our city a rich and varied cultural heritage. Our citizens honor and respect the diversity that exists in Huntington Beach. When acts of hate are committed against any citizen, it is considered an act against the entire community.

The Huntington Beach City Council declares that everyone should be treated with courtesy and respect, regardless of their racial background, their nation of origin, the religion they practice, their sexual orientation, gender or disability status. It is the right of all citizens to pursue their daily lives with the knowledge that they will not be physically harmed or verbally abused.

The Huntington Beach City Council states in the strongest terms that it will vigorously fight criminal activity known as "hate crime" with all of the resources at its disposal. A hate crime is any criminal or attempted criminal act which is motivated by the victim's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability status. It may involve a verbal, written, or physical action that is intended to create emotional suffering, physical harm or property damage.

The City Council warns those who advocate or perpetrate hate not to test the community's resolve to oppose them. It is the city's stated policy to vigorously pursue a course of investigation, apprehension, prosecution, conviction, and incarceration of all those who participate in hate crimes.

In support of this declaration, the City Council sends these messages:

To the community we say, "Believe in the interdependence of all people. Participate at your places of worship and community meetings and lend your voice in opposing hate."

To the schools we say, "Continue your programs and curricula which promote respect towards those who are different. Call on resources of the city, the county, the state, and the nation as you engage in the educational process to battle hate."

To the parents we say, "Act as positive role models for your children by demonstrating tolerance towards those whose race, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability status may be different from yours. You are the most powerful influence on your children's behavior."

To the young people we say, "Educate yourself to the ways of the world and the lessons of history. Develop sensitivity toward the feelings of others. Thus, as you grow into adulthood and become society's leaders, you will be more effective in the fight to preserve man's humanity toward man."

We must all remember that a great war was fought in which millions of innocent people lost their lives as a result of one of the greatest hate crimes in history. It is the martyrdom of those people who should serve to encourage all of us in the fight against hate. We must all become activists in this battle as a living memorial to those who lost their lives. Let us not forget the millions who came before, who but for the absence of strong opposition at an early time, would have lived long, happy, and productive lives.

Remember that silence and apathy are the greatest allies of those committing hate crime. If you are a victim or a witness of a hate crime, go to the nearest telephone, call 911, and say "I want to report a hate crime." With those seven words, you will instantly have as an ally the full resources of the city of Huntington Beach and the nearly 200,000 citizens of our city. You are not alone!

Together, the city of Huntington Beach and its citizens will succeed in their efforts to permanently eliminate all hate crimes. The Huntington Beach City Council declares that it will not tolerate any hate crimes in our community.

The foregoing declaration of policy about Human dignity was unanimously adopted by the Huntington Beach City Council on May 6, 1996.