

Belmont Human Rights Commission's Statement on Buffalo's Mass Shooting

The Belmont Human Rights Commission wants to extend its support and solidarity with Buffalo's Black community after the outrageous domestic terrorist attack waged against them on May 14th. Their community supermarket was expressly targeted because its clients were predominantly Black. Members of the Black community were tragically slaughtered to send a message of hate and white supremacy. That is why, along with other Belmont community organizations, the Belmont Human Rights Commission joins the Buffalo community in remembering the victims who were fatally wounded in this heinous attack: Aaron Salter Jr., Celestine Chaney, Roberta A. Drury, Andre Mackniel, Katherine Massey, Margus D. Morrison, Heyward Patterson, Geraldine Talley, Ruth Whitfield, and Pearl Young. Their humanity and the loss suffered by the survivors and their loved ones will not be forgotten. We also want to extend our support and solidarity to the victims and families affected by recent acts of domestic terrorism occurring over the same time period in a Taiwanese church in Laguna Woods, CA, resulting in the death of John Cheng, MD and the targeted shootings in Dallas, TX's Koreatown.

The Belmont Human Rights Commission also recognizes that the root cause of these domestic terrorist attacks is white supremacist ideology which has become more mainstream in political discourse. The Commission repudiates all forms of hate and discrimination whether in its most subtle and pernicious forms - such as discrimination and prejudice - or in its more violent and outrageous forms - such as terroristic and racist mass murders. The Belmont Human Rights Commission encourages all public and private organizations community-wide to stand against hate and terror in all of its forms.

Historically, we have seen that when hate filled individuals and organizations are allowed to spew their hate unchecked, it festers and brings disastrous outcomes. Those of us who are part of historically marginalized groups and targets of hate organizations should not shoulder the burden of legitimizing our existence. We need allies in all demographics to stand for love, human rights, and peace.

May is mental health awareness month, and the Belmont Human Rights Commission wants to clarify the myth regarding mental health and acts of terror. The vast majority of terrorists and mass shooters do not engage in such behaviors by reason of a mental illness. Folks coping with mental illness are often stigmatized when ill-informed individuals point to mental illness as the culprit for violence, when, in fact, it is hate ideology and externalized personal grievances which often motivate these individuals to terrorize others.

Finally, the Belmont Human Rights Commission offers our deepest condolences to the families and friends of the victims. We stand in solidarity with the entire Buffalo community, Laguna Woods community, and the Dallas community, and we hold them in our thoughts and prayers as they begin the journey of grieving, healing, and coming to terms with this horrific act of domestic terrorism. As we move forward, we encourage our community to choose not only sentiments but actions. For example, consider the

viewing and consumer choices that reflect your values, and use your voice, especially if it is one of privilege, to stand for love, peace, and human rights.

The Belmont Human Rights Commission is dedicated to fighting discrimination in all forms and increasing visibility and awareness of issues regarding diversity and discrimination in our community. If you have experienced discrimination in Belmont, please contact us at belmont.hrc@gmail.com or call 617-993-2795.

Resources:

1. [SAMHSA's national disaster distress hotline provides support for those affected by this tragedy.](#)
2. [Southern Poverty Law Center.](#)