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Lansing Joins National Mayors' Compact to Combat Hate, Extremism and Bigotry

(LANSING) – Mayor Virg Bernero announced today that the City of Lansing has joined more than 200 other cities across America in the Mayors' Compact to Combat Hate, Extremism and Bigotry. Organized by the Anti-Defamation League and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Compact aims to leverage the powerful collective voice of mayors to reject the wave of hatred and extremism that threatens to undermine our nation's values and tear apart our nation's unity.

“Lansing has a deep and lasting commitment to diversity, mutual respect and inclusion,” said Mayor Bernero. “As a community we explicitly reject all forms of hatred, bigotry and extremism that devalue the humanity of our citizens and attempt to divide us based on our race, ethnicity, religion, national origins, immigration status, gender or sexual orientation. By joining forces with hundreds of mayors across America, we amplify the voice of Lansing residents and community leaders who are disgusted by the vile acts of hatred that are a direct result of encouragement from The White House. Together we are taking a stand against hatred and sending an unequivocal message to President Trump that Lansing, Michigan and hundreds of cities across our great nation vehemently reject his moral equivalence between hate groups and those who rise up to oppose them.”

“Our nation fought and won a global war that put millions of our servicemen and women in harm's way and cost more than four-hundred thousand American lives and more than a half-million wounded to defeat exactly the same kind of hate-based extremism that resulted in the Holocaust and the extermination of more than 6 million people based solely on their religion. We cannot and will not turn back the clock or stand on the sidelines while people like Donald Trump appeal to the worst elements of our society and intentionally fuel the same divisive, hateful movements that we rejected more than 60 years ago.”

The guiding principles and agenda of the Mayors' Compact to Combat Hate, Extremism and Bigotry are:

[more]

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE & THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

MAYORS' COMPACT TO COMBAT HATE, EXTREMISM AND BIGOTRY

The United States of America is a nation founded on principles of liberty and justice for all. We treasure our freedom, our commitment to equality, and our democratic values. These values are what has made America great for more than 240 years.

Individual Americans can, and often do, agree to disagree with each other on issues large and small. Differences should be celebrated. And our freedom of speech and the other rights enshrined in the First Amendment are among our most cherished freedoms.

But our diverse and pluralistic nation has endured and thrived for centuries because we have been able to reject the forces of extremism and bigotry that could tear us apart. The country has a long history of striving to be a more perfect union. In the face of challenges and division, we have stood together – Americans of different races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations, genders, nationalities, and political persuasions – and we have found ways to move forward.

For decades, America's mayors have taken a strong position in support of civil rights and in opposition to racism and discrimination of all kinds. In the 54 years since the murder of Medgar Evers in Jackson, Mississippi, the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, which killed four young girls, and the March on Washington led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., much progress has been made in addressing past grievances and in ensuring the civil and human rights of all Americans.

Across the country, many mayors have spoken out against discrimination and injustice when it has occurred and have undertaken efforts to build tolerance and understanding within their communities. In recent years, cities have undertaken efforts to integrate immigrants into their communities and have adopted a variety of policies to include fully and treat equitably their LGBT residents.

Today, however, we are being challenged again. Dark forces of extremism and violent bigotry are rearing their ugly heads. We are now seeing efforts in our states and at the highest levels of our government to weaken existing civil rights policies and reduce their enforcement. We have seen an increase in hate violence, xenophobic rhetoric, and discriminatory actions that target Muslims, Jews, and other minorities. We will not permit them to succeed.

Mayors and their cities must continue to be a beacon for inclusion, tolerance, and respect for all. We will continue to create stronger cultures of kindness and compassion in our communities, and expect our federal and state partners to join us in this endeavor.

The Anti-Defamation League and The United States Conference of Mayors are launching a new initiative to fight extremism and bigotry and to promote the fundamental principles of justice and equality that define America.

The Mayors' Compact has 10 key components:

1. EXPRESSLY REJECTING EXTREMISM, WHITE SUPREMACY AND ALL FORMS OF BIGOTRY

Mayors will use the bully pulpit to speak out against racism, extremism, xenophobia, white supremacy and all forms of bigotry, and those who espouse such ideologies, and promote community conversations around these issues as needed.

2. DENOUNCING ALL ACTS OF HATE WHEREVER THEY OCCUR

Mayors will publicly denounce specific acts of hate and support efforts to punish bias-motivated violence to the fullest extent of the law, and provide comfort and assistance to victims of hate crimes and discrimination.

3. ENSURING PUBLIC SAFETY WHILE PROTECTING FREE SPEECH AND OTHER BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Mayors will protect public safety while safeguarding free speech and other basic constitutional rights through the use of appropriate time, place, and manner restrictions. This might include encouraging alternative rally sites and placing limits on the rights of protestors to bring weapons to political rallies.

4. CALLING FOR FULLY-RESOURCED LAW ENFORCEMENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS INVESTIGATIONS OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM AND HATE CRIMES

Mayors will work to ensure that local police departments have the financial resources necessary to prevent, respond to and investigate domestic terrorism and hate crimes, and work with federal authorities when appropriate to ensure that the interests of justice are served.

5. ELEVATING AND PRIORITIZING ANTI-BIAS AND ANTI-HATE PROGRAMS IN OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS

Mayors will encourage schools to implement anti-bias and anti-hate content in their curricula and/or through extra-curricular activities. ADL and other groups have materials and training programs that can help make this happen.

6. SUPPORTING TARGETED COMMUNITIES AND BRINGING TOGETHER CIVIC AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO BUILD TRUST

Mayors will reach out proactively to civil rights leaders, clergy and other community leaders to ensure that they are engaged and actively involved in efforts to build trust across neighborhood and community lines and minimize intergroup tensions.

7. CELEBRATING DIVERSITY, PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY AND CHALLENGING BIAS

Mayors will support the integration of immigrants and other new residents into the community, encourage community activities which celebrate diversity and educate city residents about the different cultures that compose a city's population, and work with creative partners to use various electronic and print media outlets to promote public messages celebrating inclusivity and challenging bias. Mayors also will support inherent bias training for local elected and business leaders to help combat institutional racism.

8. PROMOTING LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING ON RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING HATE INCIDENTS, HATE CRIMES AND DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Mayors will encourage their police departments to participate in training programs offered by ADL and others that address how to identify and respond to hate incidents, hate crimes, and domestic terrorism. Members will also encourage the collection of data on such crimes and the provision of the data to appropriate state authorities and the FBI in compliance with the Federal Hate Crime Statistics Act.

9. ENCOURAGING RESIDENTS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES TO REPORT HATE INCIDENTS AND CRIMES, INCLUDING USING HOT LINES AND ONLINE TOOLS

Mayors will encourage residents – both victims and witnesses – to report hate incidents and hate crimes to local authorities, and provide the tools necessary to facilitate such reporting, including hot lines and online tools, as possible and appropriate.

10. MAINTAINING CIVIL RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT AND STRENGTHENING HATE CRIME LAWS WHEN NECESSARY

Mayors will work with executive and legislative partners at the federal and state levels to assure that civil rights laws are aggressively enforced, existing hate crime laws are strengthened as needed, and new laws are enacted to ensure that all hate crimes are prosecutable in their jurisdictions to the greatest extent possible.

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