



1282 Green Knolls Drive,
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

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<http://www.northwestsuburbaninterfaith.org>

An Interfaith Statement on Religious Discrimination

In light of recent calls for tracking, registering or closing our borders to people who practice the Muslim faith, the Northwest Suburban Interfaith Council, a coalition of Jewish and Christian communities formed 25 years ago in response to acts of hatred directed against faith communities, feels the need to speak out on behalf of our Muslim brothers and sisters.

We are appalled by the violence being done and hatred being spread in the name of the God who we believe teaches us the value of human life, the prized place of peace, and the imperative to work for justice for all. These values lead us to condemn any and all acts of violence, especially those committed by people who claim a religious justification.

We are also deeply concerned when we hear people advocate treating any group differently because of their faith. Each of us can look to the history of our own faith communities and find examples of when our brothers and sisters faced discrimination or persecution for their religious beliefs, and sadly, many of us can find examples of times when people of our faiths have discriminated against others. Regardless of which traditions are on which side of the issue, discrimination based on religion has caused nothing but intense suffering and pain throughout history - whether in the form of conquests, crusades, pogroms, wars of religion, the Holocaust, or the persecution of people of many different faiths by terrorists in the Middle East today.

Any time a society gives its blessing to discrimination against people based on their religion, it opens the door to frightening possibilities. It may be "someone else's" faith today, but it has been each of our faiths in the past, and could be any of our faiths tomorrow. This applies equally to people who exercise their constitutionally-protected right not to belong to any particular faith as well.

We are not blind to the threat posed to our children, our communities and our nation by groups who claim to be motivated by religion. We believe that law enforcement and public safety agencies at the federal, state, and local levels, including those who handle border security, must be given the tools they need to help keep us safe. But those tools must reflect the values of our nation and the values inherent in our religious traditions.

We do not believe that singling out one religious group for different treatment by our government is faithful to how God calls us to live, and we do not believe it honors the values of equality and religious freedom that our nation holds dear. Our nation is a shining light in the world because we have firmly and repeatedly rejected discrimination based on faith. We believe that religious diversity makes our nation strong and that it is time for members of all faiths to stand courageously against any ideology or political movement that devalues the richness of any religious tradition.

In this time in our nation when so many are fearful, we choose to put our trust in the God who invites us to love our neighbor. We pray for this God's guidance as we seek to find ways to protect life and to lift up the value of every life.



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We, the undersigned, affirm this statement:

Rabbi Lisa Sari Bellows, Rabbi Richard Prass, Cantor Barbara Shyette Barnett, Rochelle Greenwald, Diane Popper, Congregation Beth Am

Rabbi Jeff Pivo, Cantor Roger Weisberg, Helene Fox, Congregation Beth Judea

David Schulman, Congregation B'nai Shalom

Reverend James Andrews, Pastor, Susan Nielsen, Hope Lutheran Church

Reverend James Preston, Lead Pastor, Reverend Luke Pepper, Deacon, Jay Jayapalan, Kingswood United Methodist Church

Sharon Gorski, Lutheran Church of Good Shepherd

Rabbi Eitan Weiner-Kaplow, Rabbi Scott Segal, Marla Callistein, Shir Hadash Synagogue

Reverend Curtis A. Lambert, Lynn Moriarty, Lisa Nars, Saint Alphonsus Liguori Parish

Reverend Daniel Whiteside, Pastor, Reverend Denis Carneiro, Reverend Richard Sztorc, Deacon Gary Long, Delores Palikij, St. Mary Parish

Father Corey Brost, Viatorian priest

Rabbi Stephen Hart, Rabbi Ilana Baden, Cantor Scott Simon, Richard Rosen, Temple Chai

Council President Joanne Dicker, Congregation Beth Judea

Clergy Council Chair Rev. Eric C. Schlichting, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd