



The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Condemns Past and Recent Comments Motivated by or Evidencing Religious Intolerance

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, by unanimous vote, condemns past and recent comments motivated by or evidencing religious intolerance.¹ Such remarks, particularly when they are made by American political leaders, have no place in America, a nation founded on ideals of religious freedom.

At a recent presentation to the Commission, a U.S. Holocaust Museum historian stated that white supremacy and anti-Semitism were not extinguished 50 years ago after the Holocaust² nor are they extinguished from our current world. The presentation highlighted the danger inherent in fostering hate and allowing religious intolerance to be accepted in public discourse. These dangers do not lie in the distant past but are still with us. For over sixty years, the Commission has stood vigilant against the threats of faith-based bias.³ As the Commission has unanimously stated previously: our nation's leadership must use their platforms to fight against forces that would seek to divide us on the basis of differences.⁴

Today we reiterate that message. Those who use words of intolerance for political gain have not learned the lessons on the true danger of this path. Their actions and choice of words bring discomfort and fear to many, contrary to the values of acceptance we should all champion. We urge all of America's leaders – whether in Congress, the White House, or other seats of power – not to engage in religiously intolerant activity but rather to speak strongly against bigotry and hate, wherever it may manifest.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. Please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

¹ E.g., Kyle Cheney, *Steve King singles out Somali Muslims over pork*, Politico, Jun. 22, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/06/22/steve-king-muslims-pork-664949>; Susan David, *Rep. Ilhan Omar Apologies 'Unequivocally' for Remarks Condemned As Anti-Semitic*, NPR, Feb. 11, 2019, <https://wamu.org/story/19/02/11/house-democrats-urge-party-leaders-to-condemn-anti-semitism/>.

² Presentation before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by Rebecca Erbeling, Ph.D., of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Mar. 22, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccW8WL1uOrg&feature=youtu.be&t=526>.

³ See, e.g., U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Intimidation and Violence: Racial and Religious Bigotry in America*, Jan. 1983, <http://www2.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/usccr/documents/cr11077.pdf>.

⁴ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Mourns the Loss of Life in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Jeffersontown, Kentucky*, Nov. 2, 2018, <https://www.usccr.gov/press/2018/11-02-Pittsburgh-Jeffersontown-PR.pdf>.