

County Executive Remarks
Reaffirmation of Jewish Solidarity Press Conference
Bender Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington
6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD 20852
March 3
10:00 a.m.

In the light of threats and negative sentiments being expressed toward the Jewish people and people of other faiths in Montgomery County and around the nations, it is important to reaffirm our solidarity with our Jewish sisters and brothers. And, I want to take a moment to express our deep sympathy to the families of the two victims of last week's murderous hate crime in Kansas. These two young and accomplished engineers came to America from our Sister City in Hyderabad, India to live the American dream. Now, one is gone and the other injured. The hatred must stop; and that is part of the main reason we are here today.

I am pleased to be joined here by a number of leaders representing the Jewish community including the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington; and also U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen; Representatives John Sarbanes, John Delaney, and Jamie Raskin; Council President Roger Berliner, and the rest of the County Council to reaffirm my belief that followers of the Jewish faith are valued and respected here in Montgomery County.

The great religious diversity of our County is interwoven with our Jewish residents and demonstrates the best cooperation that makes our Montgomery County model so special. As far as our County government is concerned, we are working diligently every day to make sure that we are hearing concerns, meeting needs, and addressing problems when and where they arise. We are working to ensure respect and effective law enforcement services toward the Jewish community.

The County Council and I passed a resolution that calls on the County's MC311 system to provide operators and staff with special instructions to assist anyone on how to report and deal with hate crimes and harassment, including information about legal resources and support services. When appropriate, MC311 operators will also transfer calls to the Montgomery County Police Department's non-emergency number and provide information regarding the Office of Human Rights.

I can assure you that your County Government will do everything in its power to protect basic human rights and to affirm the value of every ethnicity, race and religion. I ask everyone to reach out in concern for our Jewish, and other, neighbors. Let us respond to the current climate of fear and prejudice with words of encouragement and hope. The Jewish people are our neighbors, our friends, and an integral part of our beloved County.