



COMMITTEE ON HATE VIOLENCE

OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

On behalf of the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights (“OHR”) and the Montgomery County Committee on Hate/Violence (“COHV” or “the Committee”), we present this open letter to the residents of Charleston, South Carolina and more specifically, the parishioners of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston. Sadly, we realize that unspeakable acts of hate likely occur every day in some region of our world. However, the heinous act of hate which resulted in the deaths of nine members of the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on June 17th is incomprehensible. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to all of those impacted by this vile act of domestic terrorism. Please accept our support, sympathy for and solidarity with the local church communities.

Our Committee’s existence is purposed on our commitment to identify incidents that rise to the level of hate/violence and most importantly, implement initiatives that we believe will minimize (and hopefully) bring an end to these actions. Clearly, this was an unspeakable and reprehensible incident which occurred outside of Montgomery County, Maryland; however, the COHV acknowledges that acts of hate which occur anywhere in our nation can have an effect on all of us. We share in your grief and recognize that our collective pain and grief can work to promote the cause for racial reconciliation in our nation.

Our mission, as it relates to the citizens of Montgomery County is to work for equality, understanding and respect for all people through community education, collaboration and legislation. As people who strive for the betterment of all, we share in the commitment to continue to battle expressions of intolerance, hate and violence. Those who perished in Charleston will never be forgotten.

Office of Human Rights