



Jewish Community Relations Council

of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

JCRC: PURSUING A JUST SOCIETY AND SECURE JEWISH FUTURE

ADVOCATE
ON ISSUES
OF VITAL
CONCERN

PROMOTE
MUTUAL
RESPECT

REPAIR
THE
WORLD

DO NOT
STAND
IDLY BY

STRENGTHEN
OUR CIVIL
SOCIETY AND
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTIONS

SPEAK
WITH A
COLLECTIVE
VOICE

WWW.JCRC.ORG

JCRC and Bay Area Community Statement on the Arizona Shooting 1-14-11

Our hearts and prayers go out to the families of those who lost their lives and were injured in the tragic, brutal and murderous attack in Tucson, Arizona. We are sickened by the rampage and are grateful for the courageous individuals whose actions clearly prevented more killings.

The growing political polarization and breakdown of civil discourse that has become too common in our society has received renewed attention in the face of the shooting spree. There are differing views as to whether the perpetrator in Arizona, whom it is reported may have significant psychological problems, was influenced by the extreme rhetoric and violent imagery that have seeped into political discussion around immigration and other social issues in Arizona. Without drawing any conclusions on that issue, this moment of unity in the face of an unspeakable tragedy should remind all Americans of the importance of debating issues without injecting personal invective or personal attacks into the discourse.

Too often violent attacks against political leaders have coincided with an atmosphere of growing hate and intolerance that has been interpreted by a single individual as license to take extreme and violent action. We cannot afford as a nation to wait until there is irrefutable evidence that a rampage sometime in the future was motivated by growing appeals to see those who hold different political views as enemies who pose a serious threat and must be stopped at any cost. We know already what danger lies in allowing such a toxic atmosphere to go unchallenged.

We can debate, disagree, and argue vehemently – there are serious issues facing our country about which we have strongly held and often differing views -- but we must do so in a way that avoids dehumanization, xenophobia or demagoguery. We strongly urge our public officials, the media and representatives of the diverse communities that form our great nation to lead by example. Let us seize upon this moment as a warning about the fragility of the state of our society's civil discourse and a reminder for all Americans to look at our public officials and the fellow members of our communities as individuals to be respected regardless of political difference or background.

Signed:

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Islamic Networks Group

Jewish Community Relations Council

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