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Arlington Democratic Nominees Stand Against Racism and Bigotry

Arlington, VA – August 19, 2017 — Arlington leaders stood for equality and diversity when the Arlington County Board and School Board condemned the hate and bigotry in Charlottesville.

The Arlington County Board stated, "Arlington rejects the hateful speech and actions of the KKK, white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the alt-right movement. As many yard signs across Arlington proclaim: 'hate has no home here.'"

Responding to the numerous letters it had received from citizens concerned that the various streets and public buildings named after figures who fought to maintain slavery are becoming a rallying point for dangerous white supremacist ideologues, the Board committed itself again to seeking authority from the General Assembly to rename the portions of Jefferson Davis Highway and Lee Highway that run through Arlington.

The Arlington School Board echoed these sentiments and addressed school names, "We, the Arlington School Board, join our Governor and state leaders, many national leaders and our local leaders, friends, and neighbors in rejecting the hate, racism, bigotry, and violence that was forced on Charlottesville this past weekend. . . It's time to talk about the names of our schools, and what they mean, and why they matter. It is time to talk about the values these names reflect and the messages we are sending to our children."

The School Board will establish a public process to create criteria to name new schools and reassess the name of every school in Arlington. This process won't be done overnight, but is now underway.

Delegates Mark Levine (45th District), Patrick Hope (47th District), Rip Sullivan (48th District), and Alfonso Lopez (49th District and House Democratic Whip) all expressed strong support for ending the glorification of symbols of divisiveness and hate. Delegate Lopez said, "It's long past time for us to rename highways that were labeled to send a hateful and divisive message to people of color in our community."

Erik Gutshall, Democratic Nominee for Arlington County Board, said, "I am proud to live in a community that has long shared the values of diversity and inclusion. I fully embrace the County Board's determination to garner local control of the names of our roadways, as I know Arlington's delegation to the Virginia General Assembly do."

Monique O'Grady, Democratic Endorsee for School Board, said, "In the wake of deadly violence in Charlottesville, it is crystal clear that hate and bigotry have no place in our schools, on our streets, or in our community. I welcome our community starting a dialogue about Arlington's inclusive values and how they are reflected in the names of our current and future schools."

Each of these candidates has been nominated or endorsed by Arlington Democrats.

Arlington County Democratic Committee Chair Kip Malinosky said, "Arlington Democrats share in the sorrow of all Virginians, and in particular those of the people of Charlottesville and the families of Heather Heyer and Virginia State Troopers H. Jay Cullen and Berke M.M. Bates. Confederate monuments have become rallying points for those that are white supremacists, Nazis and KKK members. We must eliminate intolerance in all its forms and take necessary steps to support inclusiveness, not just in the symbolic renaming of public streets, buildings and monuments, but also in schools, work places and politics by ensuring voting rights and eliminating racial gerrymandering. Our committee remains committed to fight for these values each and every day."

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