



Message from President Eric Rudin

HATE IS HATE

Dear Fellow Culver City Democrats United Members and Supporters,

In sitting down to write my message this month, my first thought was to give you all a coach's pep talk about going out there and recruiting members for our new club. As much as I would have liked to have written about a push for membership, or the important holidays this month, my mind kept coming back to the issue of hate that we are dealing with on a constant basis.

As I am sure you already know, June is Pride Month. When I think about pride month, I think about how great it is to live in a part of the world that celebrates our LGBTQ+ community. However, at the same time, I also think about the parts of the world where to even come out means a death sentence, as well as the people in our country who are turning up the volume on hate directed at the LGBTQ+ community, especially the transgender community. The hate is unacceptable and has tragic consequences. From mass shootings to frightening suicide rates, the LGBTQ+ community remains under attack. We must stand up and fight for their safety and their inalienable rights.

Thankfully the LGBTQ+ community has allies in our Democratic Party who are trying to make our society a safe and open one for all. We see Democratic Party members, from the highest office we have all the way down to our local community members voicing their support for our LGBTQ+ community. We have marches, parades, and rallies locally, nationally, and in many nations around the world to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. Here in Culver City, we just had our Pride Ride and Rally on Saturday, June 3. Our society has a long way to go but the LGBTQ+ community knows it has our support in the Democratic Party and that we will not tolerate hate directed the LGBTQ+ community's way.

Later this month, we will also celebrate Juneteenth, the day that marks the emancipation of black slaves. As with hatred directed toward the LGBTQ+ community, there is much work to be done when it comes to combatting racism, both in our interactions and systemically. We continue to see the disastrous impact of systemic racism from blatant acts of voter suppression to the murder by police of unarmed people of color. The racism that permeates our society with everyday citizens judging people not by the content of their character but by the color of their skin is unacceptable. The results are unsurprisingly disastrous, from unequal healthcare treatment to blatant harassment from fellow citizens that nobody should have to face.



As with the LGBTQ+ community, we in the Democratic Party have consistently taken positions to support persons of color whether it comes to abominations like racist voting laws meant to suppress the vote of black Americans or disparate treatment with basic utilities like accessibility to clean water. As Democrats, we believe that no person or group of people should suffer simply because of their skin color or where they live. To that end, we must remain vigilant and increase not only our awareness of how racism impacts our society but also concrete actions that we can take individually and as a party to make it so that we are all playing on an equal playing field.

All of this takes me to something going on within our School Board here in Culver City recently. In April of this year, School Board Member Dr. Kelly Kent retweeted false information that referred to Israel as a nation engaging in apartheid. She published the retweet just hours before the first Seder of Passover. Shockingly and sadly, School Board Member Triston Ezidore responded to one parent's email by replying with "Retweets \neq endorsements." (Of note, School Board Member Ezidore is taking a trip to Israel later this month sponsored by the Jewish Federation.) I then sent an email to our School Board, specifically including School Board Member Ezidore's email address, and our Superintendent. Aside from Dr. Kent wanting to talk off the record, I got zero response. So, I emailed again as more time passed. Nothing.

Fast forward to last month. Dr. Kent retweeted a tweet that referred to the establishment of Israel as the "Nakba," which translates to "catastrophe" in Arabic. I and some fellow Jewish CCUSD parents were not only appalled but also now worried about our children. The sole response I got to my email this time was from Superintendent Tran who stated that he didn't speak for the School Board and that, regarding Dr. Kent's posts, I would "need to address a request for comment to the person who made it." Interestingly, Superintendent Tran's email signature has a quote from Rabbi Hillel: "If Not Us, Who? If Not Now, When?" I emailed a response to Superintendent Tran back on May 25, 2023, in part asking him to abide by the Rabbi Hillel quote in his signature. So far, no response. As Jewish community members and CCUSD parents, we have been talking about what we can do to stem the tide of antisemitism we are facing at CCUSD, between Dr. Kent's hateful posts and the District's decision to remove Yom Kippur as a school holiday. We have been talking to our religious leaders and will try to think of ways to stand up to the hate peacefully and respectfully.

All of this takes me to something I told you in our first meeting when I said that I would take positions and voice opinions that may not be popular. Unfortunately, Dr. Kent has many allies. As such, while it might not be a position that wins a popularity contest here in Culver City to speak out against her hateful posts, I see standing up to antisemitism as a priority, not only because I am Jewish, but also because I believe that hate is hate and that it has no place in our society. While it may be easier as Democrats to stand up to a Marjorie Taylor Greene or Tucker Carlson for their hateful actions and remarks, it is equally important that we stand up to hate that comes from our own party.



In sum, my message is not that you or I should stand up against antisemitism because I am Jewish or because our community needs your voices. My message is that we should stand up against antisemitism because I want to be a part of a club that, when confronted with hate, no matter the source, no matter whom it is directed at, and no matter the optics, says, "Not on our watch." Remember, silence is hate's biggest ally while sunlight is its greatest enemy.

Best regards,

Eric Rudin

Culver City Democrats Untied President