

*In the City Council, July 13th, in the Year Two Thousand and Seventeen*

Upon the recommendation of the Human Rights Commission

17.360

A Resolution

Supporting the Culture of Civility in the City of Northampton

- Whereas, there has been an increase in Northampton and around the country of bias-motivated name-calling and language that demeans people based on who they are and where they are from; and
- Whereas, the New York Times, Boston Globe and other national media outlets around the country have responded to this increase by inviting people to report such incidents; and
- Whereas, we wholeheartedly support freedom of speech as the cornerstone of a healthy democracy, we also believe that respect for each other is as vital to a healthy community as is the preservation of free speech; and
- Whereas, we believe speech that denigrates people for who they are, even if legally-protected speech, undermines the sense of safety of those who are targeted and also tears the fabric of a civilized, respectful community; and
- Whereas, we believe the responsibility for creating a community climate respectful to all falls not with the police or other law enforcement authorities, but with every single one of us who commit to respecting each other and supporting people targeted by hate slurs when we witness them; and
- Whereas, in this city, we believe everyone has a right to feel safe walking down the street; and
- Whereas, that while we protect free speech, we believe with free speech comes responsibility; and
- Whereas, we call upon all people in the Northampton community to commit to not using hate speech including racist slurs, homophobic name-calling, sexist catcalls and other forms of personal degradation; and
- Whereas, free speech is not a license to demean other members of our community, to threaten the safety of individuals, and the security of the community as a whole; and
- Whereas, if we witness such incidents, we will remember that the responsibility for a respectful and civilized community falls upon each one of us;