

## **STATEMENT FROM THE ANCRAM TOWN BOARD REGARDING HATE SPEECH, INCLUSION AND UNDERSTANDING**

The Ancram Town Board would like to shed light on some disturbing acts of hate and bigotry which recently took place in our town, and to make its position very clear on such behavior.

Ancram is a town that takes pride in the individuality of our residents and visitors alike and values dignity and respect for all people regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other such characteristic. The personal safety of our community members, both physically and psychologically, is of the utmost importance. The Town Board unequivocally opposes any expression of hate, intolerance, prejudice, or discrimination toward any individual or group. This includes race, religion, sexual orientation and any other protected class.

Under NYS's Hate Crime Law, numerous traditional criminal offenses that are found to be motivated by bias can result in substantial sentencing enhancements. Penal L. §485.05. Nearly 70 offenses are now deemed hate crimes if the victim is targeted in whole or in substantial part because of a belief or perception regarding the race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation of a person. If convicted of a hate crime, a defendant faces a fine and potential jail time.

If you feel you have been the target of any such incident, we encourage you to reach out to local law enforcement.

To put it simply, this is not who we are. We are a small town that aspires to protect and respect ALL of our residents, businesses, neighbors and visitors and lead by example for our friends, families, and neighboring towns. Let's not stand by in these moments when our values of community, charity, and understanding are compromised. It is not through hate that Ancram will prosper, but through cooperation.

The Town Board now takes this opportunity to reiterate its Resolution of October 2022 and re-read it into the minutes.

### **Resolution Supporting Inclusion and Understanding (adopted October 2022)**

**WHEREAS**, recently as a nation we have witnessed high violence based upon a person's religion, race, gender identities, sexual orientation, nationality, economic status and political affiliation; and

**WHEREAS**, here in the United States, inclusive communities rely upon the guidance, assistance and leadership of people of all races, religions, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, economic status, and political affiliation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Ancram Town Board continues to maintain that all people have the right to feel safe and be treated equally and with respect and dignity regardless of their race, religion, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status and political affiliation.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Ancram Town Board, on behalf of our community members, do hereby reaffirm our commitment to including all races, religions, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, economic statuses and political affiliations in Town government and in the fabric of our community; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that on behalf of all residents of the Town of Ancram we denounce violence of any kind and condemn any act of aggression, hostility, or violence against any member of our community.