



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 16, 2017

Contact: [Meghan Pembroke](#), communications director, 425-257-8687

## **Mayor issues statement in response to Charlottesville tragedy Encourages community to celebrate diversity, stand up against hate**

EVERETT – *Mayor Ray Stephanson issued the following statement at the Aug. 16 City Council meeting:*

This past weekend we saw hate and violence openly displayed on the streets of Charlottesville. In subsequent days, we have seen the same intolerance and venom perpetuated online and in the news.

My heart goes out to the families of those who were killed and injured, and to the people of Charlottesville and Virginia, who are still reeling from this tragedy.

It is appalling and heartbreaking to see this kind of violent, divisive hatred in America in 2017. We have an obligation to actively and unequivocally reject white supremacy in our communities, no matter what our political beliefs. Racism and intolerance have no place in our country – whether they are blatant acts of hate or exhibited in smaller ways.

I stand with community leaders from across the country in condemning violence and extremism, and in celebrating the incredible diversity that is the heart of our nation. This week I signed on to the United States Conference of Mayors' Compact to Combat Hate, Extremism and Bigotry, an effort developed in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League.

The mayors' compact, which will be published online later this week, has 10 components, including

- supporting targeted communities and bringing together civic and community leaders to build trust
- encouraging residents in their communities to report hate incidents and crimes
- maintaining civil rights enforcement and strengthening hate crime laws when necessary
- celebrating diversity, promoting inclusivity and challenging bias; and
- promoting enhanced law enforcement training on hate incidents, hate crimes and domestic terrorism

Here in Everett, the City Council and I signed a joint resolution last December which reaffirmed our commitment to ensuring that Everett remains an inviting and safe community for all, and to opposing hate, violence and acts of intolerance. That commitment remains just as strong today.

To my fellow community members, I encourage you to continue to reject acts of intolerance and racism in our community, and to focus our energies on efforts that unite us, rather than divide us. To that end, the Snohomish County Branch of the NAACP is hosting a rally against hate this Sunday, Aug. 20, at 11 a.m., in the Snohomish County Atrium. I am unfortunately unable to participate, but members of our City staff and Everett Police Department will be there, and I encourage anyone who is able to participate to attend.

Thank you for your efforts to celebrate our community's rich diversity, and for making Everett a safe place for all of our residents.

*Learn more at [www.everettwa.gov/welcome](http://www.everettwa.gov/welcome).*

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