



Joint Statement Addressing Hate-Fueled Violence in America from the Bedrock National Leadership Council

We, the members of the National Leadership Council of Bedrock, an organization that aims to prevent hate-fueled violence, are committed to disrupting the normalization of hate-fueled violence in the United States. We believe that a united front across politics, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, faiths, institutions, and other differences is vital to reverse these disturbing trends through consistent messaging and action. We believe that we can disagree on matters of critical importance and still act together to ensure that all Americans can live their lives without fear of hate-fueled violence.

Our nation is facing a staggering and fast-growing crisis of hate-fueled violence: hate crimes are at all-time highs, political violence has reached its highest level in half a century, and seven out of ten Americans report feeling personally affected by hate-fueled violence. Americans should not have to live in fear when they work, pray, learn, vote, or otherwise enter public places.

Each of us represents a different stakeholder community, across various religious, ethnic, and other identity associations, as well as former government officials from both parties, and social justice leaders. We have joined together on Bedrock's National Leadership Council because we share a common vision: disrupting the normalization of hate and violence. We understand that all communities have a role to play in making this vision a reality.

Therefore, together:

- **We universally condemn acts of hate-fueled violence.** With violence against our community members occurring far too often, we stand together in condemning this violence and working together to prevent further acts of hate-fueled violence.
- **We support constructive disagreement.** Constructive disagreement is paramount for a healthy democracy. At times, the areas in which we disagree will touch on core beliefs. We can remain steadfast in our beliefs, even when we disagree with each other. We feel this division every day – especially as necessary disagreements are amplified by the most polarizing voices. But this fact is too often obscured: we refuse to let our disagreements define our democracy and further, we condemn any actions of hate or violence.
- **We urge peaceful methods to create change.** Just and lasting change is best achieved through non-violent actions, free from threat or intimidation. Overall, Americans support at least some opportunities for collaborative problem-solving and unity and want their leaders to share that value. So, when we fight for causes, we do so by encouraging stakeholders to passionately and respectfully exercise their right of advocacy and public education, peaceful protest, and voting.
- **We encourage tough introspection and humanizing all.** Our commitment to constructive disagreement also means we must share a commitment to work on ourselves. Each of our communities – as all communities – must, at times, turn inward to reflect on how we can engage differently. That includes correcting stereotypes about communities different from our own, finding opportunities to listen to one another, and reminding our community members that we have more in common than society would have us believe.

Society is too often oriented around the promotion and normalization of creating the “other” through scapegoating, dehumanizing, and inciting hatred toward those perceived to be different from us. We must make clear that malign tropes are unacceptable.

- **We urge the creation and nurturing of initiatives that will prevent hate-fueled violence.** We must protect all who need protection. Hate-fueled violence must be addressed through a comprehensive whole-of-government and whole-of-society effort. Such efforts must be executed at every level in good faith, be evidence-based, with strong civil rights and civil liberties protections, and in support of the reduction of hate-fueled violence toward all.

We call on all Americans to engage in the effort to disrupt the normalization of hate-fueled violence. Let us work together to create an America that provides for safety and belonging for all.

Signed:

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ANNEX

Bedrock's Explanation of the National Leadership Council Statement

At a time of historically high rates of hate, and the violence committed in its name, our nation's leaders seek to reduce tensions, demonstrate unity, and send a clear signal that hatred and violence will not be accepted *within any* community – and as such, reduce the likelihood that it be perpetrated toward *any other* community. With that in mind, the Joint Statement was informed by research from the community resilience, peacebuilding, and social cohesion fields, highlighting best practices to reduce hate-fueled violence.

The statement seeks to:

- Identify shared values across different communities;¹
- Normalize disagreement as essential to democracy while illuminating connection among those from different orientations;²
- Emphasize that there are non-violent paths for grievances;³
- Encourage communities to expose exaggerated stereotypes of non-community populations within their own communities and present relatable depictions of those non-community populations;⁴
- Mitigate non-contextualized exposure to conspiracies in one's own community by contextualizing hate-animating conspiracies through credible messengers;⁵
- Emphasize empathy, fairness, obligation to protect those who need it, and elevate the nobility of the denunciation of violence;⁶ and
- Emphasize interdependence and the need to address shared concerns.⁷

In using these evidence-base methods, it is our hope that a diverse cross-section of leaders can generate change in America to disrupt the normalization of hate-fueled violence and foster greater safety and belonging for all.

¹ *The Peacemakers' Toolkit*. Common Ground USA and American University's Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL). 2023. <https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Peacemakers-Toolkit.pdf>

² *Renewing American Democracy: Navigating A Changing Nation*. Beyond Conflict. 2022. <https://beyondconflictint.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Renewing-American-Democracy-Navigating-A-Changing-Nation-Beyond-Conflict.pdf>

³ *Communicating During Contentious Times: Dos and Don'ts to Rise Above the Noise*. Over Zero and PEN America. November 2022. <https://overzero.ghost.io/communicating-during-contentious-times-dos-and-donts-to-rise-above-the-noise/>

⁴ *Megastudy Identifying Effective Interventions to Strengthen America's Democratic Attitudes*. Stanford Democracy Challenge. 2022. <https://www.strengtheningdemocracychallenge.org/paper>

⁵ *Prebunking Interventions Based on "Inoculation" Theory Can Reduce Susceptibility to Misinformation Across Cultures*. Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review. 3 February 2020. <https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/global-vaccination-badnews/>.

⁶ *Engaging Narratives for Peace*. Alliance for Peacebuilding and Partners Global. <https://www.partnersglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/wpallimport/files/Engaging-Narratives-for-Peace-1.pdf>

⁷ *Building the Bridge to Peace: A Messaging Guide for Peacebuilders*. Frameworks Institute. April 2022. https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/peacebuilding-project-brief-quickguide_final.pdf