

Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware Region



May 26, 2011

The Honorable Steven Kline
940 Washington Lane
Rydal, PA 19046

Dear Mr. Kline:

A number of people have contacted us regarding the controversy that continues to swirl around the proposed ordinance banning discrimination in Abington Township and creating a local human relations commission.

The League wrote to President DiJoseph on two prior occasions (copies of correspondence enclosed), expressing our views on the subject. Until an ordinance is passed, individuals can be denied basic necessities such as housing and employment solely based on their sexual orientation. We also continue to believe that a commission is an important and necessary component of any ordinance to best serve the interests of the residents of Abington Township.

We have a high regard and appreciation for all the good work that has been done in Abington over the years to promote diversity and oppose prejudice, particularly in partnership with the Anti-Defamation League's **No Place for Hate**® program. However, the **No Place for Hate**® program, for all the good that it represents, does not and cannot accomplish the goals and serve the purposes of a standing body with powers to investigate and adjudicate claims of discrimination, functions which would be performed by a human relations commission. While we are very pleased that our program is so well regarded, we do not delude ourselves in thinking that it serves all purposes and would make a human relations commission superfluous.

We stand ready to assist you in any way that we can to help bring about passage of this enabling legislation. We urge you to pass this measure and, in so doing, to provide better protection for all local residents, and to enable Abington to continue to be a leader in promoting positive intergroup relations and diversity. Not to do so would be antithetical to all the positive work Abington has done and the statements Abington has made throughout many years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Morrison", is written over a horizontal line.

Barry Morrison
Regional Director

BM/sr
enclosures

cc: Chief William Kelly
Joanne Weaver-Stroh
Carol DiJoseph

Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware Region



February 7, 2011

Carol T. DiJoseph, President
Board of Commissioners
Township of Abington
1176 Old York Road
Abington, PA 19001

Dear Carol:

Nancy Baron-Baer, ADL's Associate Regional Director, and I were pleased to speak with you by phone the other day. Thank you for understanding our concerns regarding the use of **No Place for Hate**® in the proposed anti-discrimination legislation. We greatly appreciate and are very proud of the work that is done in Abington through our **No Place for Hate**® program. As we have previously conveyed, we support Abington Township establishing a body that has the authority to investigate, mediate and refer acts of hate or prejudice directed at local residents motivated by those characteristics enumerated in the draft legislation.

Please know of our continuing interest in working with you on all aspects of human relations challenges. We are eager to assist you as you continue to make Abington a wholesome and welcoming community.

We look forward to future contacts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Morrison", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Barry Morrison
Regional Director

BM/sr

cc: Nancy K. Baron-Baer

Eastern Pennsylvania/Delaware Region



March 9, 2011

The Honorable Carol DiJoseph
739 Crescent Avenue
Glenside, PA 19038

Dear Ms. DiJoseph:

I am writing you in regard to the proposed nondiscrimination ordinance that is expected to come before the Abington Township Board in the near future. It is our understanding that the latest version of this ordinance does not call for the creation of a township human relations commission.

The Anti-Defamation League has had the good fortune to work closely with Abington Township, its schools and police department for some time to combat hate and bigotry. Abington Township has been one of the most active and involved **No Place for Hate**® communities. We applaud the landmark work of Abington Township's No Place for Hate Rapid Response Team and the enthusiastic engagement in this project by your school district and Penn State University's Abington Campus. Joanne Weaver-Stroh and Dave Rondinelli have been staunch advocates for **No Place for Hate**®. They have served ably in the leadership of the project in your township. They and Abington Township have been honored and recognized at one of our Board meetings for their commitment to **No Place for Hate**®.

Of course, we have spoken with you about **No Place for Hate**® and its relation to a proposed local human relations commission, with an eye toward creating and sustaining a wholesome and healthy environment in Abington as a place where all can be treated fairly and with respect.

An article in the February 14 issue of the Glenside News Globe Times Chronicle states that reports of discrimination in the township are being handled by **No Place for Hate**®: "Currently, reports of discrimination are handled by the anti-discrimination group **No Place for Hate**®, along with the police department." Also, "The plan to form a human relations commission was dissolved because **No Place for Hate**® is so effective," said DiJoseph.

No Place for Hate® is a programmatic tool that creates an environment and facilitates activities, programs and initiatives to challenge anti-Semitism, racism, hatred, and bigotry in all forms. It is not a vehicle to adjudicate discrimination complaints; we do not

The Honorable Carol DiJoseph
March 9, 2011
Page Two

have the authority to do that, and only a government body can do so. A human relations commission, as a government body, can be given the authority to address complaints brought by aggrieved residents seeking redress in cases where they believe they are subjects of discrimination. In this way, all citizens can feel that they are being treated equally, protected under the law, and have a formal vehicle to secure the rights that they feel might be abrogated.

We firmly support the idea of an Abington human relations commission and have written to you before to say so. A human relations commission can only enhance the importance of **No Place for Hate**[®]'s achievements and build upon them. For that matter, **No Place for Hate**[®] can also make local residents more aware of the importance of a human relations commission and encourage them to turn to it for assistance.

Abington Township, as we have said above, has been a leader and innovator in our region. You have the opportunity, by creating a human relations commission, to continue your enlightened leadership. If we can be of assistance in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Morrison', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Barry Morrison
Regional Director

BM/sr