Faithful Georgians Demand Justice for Ahmaud Arbery

The senseless and tragic killing of Ahmaud Arbery calls for more than condolences and condemnations from our lawmakers. The moment calls for swift and decisive action. As Georgia faith leaders, we hold sacred the moral principles of love for our neighbors and the equality of all humankind. We call on the Georgia General Assembly to unanimously pass the Georgia Enhanced Penalties for Hate Crimes Act, HB 426. Passing this legislation will ensure that those who carry out violence in the name of bigotry are held accountable.

Georgia is one of only four states in the U.S. that does not have a hate crimes prevention law.

Hate crimes terrorize not only our streets, but also our congregations. Recent hateful attacks against places of worship from Gainesville to Columbus are painful to our congregants and alarming for our communities. We fear all forms of hate crime will become more widespread if we do not act now.

We can no longer ignore this violence and its harmful effects on our state. Even lawmakers’ most righteous words are no substitute for action in the fight against the sickness of white supremacy and the sinful practice of racial profiling. As faith leaders, we will do everything in our power to ensure that all Georgians can jog in our streets, pray in our congregations and exercise their rights in our communities without fear of being hunted down by bigotry.

Our elected officials must do the same by voting “yes” on HB 426. Bigotry will not leave of its own accord. We must unite morally to drive it out. In this spirit, we are united against all forms of hatred and bigotry -- and the violence these evils engender.

Rev. Antoine Wright
Kennesaw, GA

Rev. Dr. James Lamkin
Northside Drive Baptist Church
Atlanta, GA

Rev. Joy Fisher
Presbytery of Greater Atlanta
Tucker, GA

Rev. David Messner
Unitarian Church in Charleston
Savannah, GA

Rev. Philip Hedgecoth
Grovetown, GA

Rev. Cynthia Parr
PCUSA
Marietta, GA
Rev. Cynthia Hale  
Ray of Hope Christian Church  
Conyers, GA

Rev. Dr. Richard Hill  
Atlanta, GA

Rabbi Lydia Medwin  
The Temple  
Decatur, GA

Rev. Bob Thompson  
Compassionate Atlanta  
Atlanta, GA

Doug Adkins  
Hardwick Baptist Church  
Madison, GA

Rabbi Bradley Levenberg  
Temple Sinai  
Atlanta, GA

Rev. francois pellissier  
Glenmary  
Fitzgerald, GA

Rabbi Lawrence Sernovitz  
Marietta, GA

Deacon Christopher Lemley  
Christ Church - Kennesaw, GA  
Atlanta, GA

Rev. Dr. Billie Boyd-Cox  
Macedonia Baptist Church  
Conyers, GA

Minister Shavonne Williams  
Women of Wonder Outreach Ministry  
Hephzibah, GA

Sharin Austin  
Lithonia, GA

Rev. Dr. Tony Lankford  
First Baptist Church, St. Simons Island, GA  
Saint Simons Island, GA

Sister Margaret Fannon, RSM  
Sisters of Mercy  
Atlanta, GA

Rabbi Alexandria Shuval-Weiner  
Temple Beth Tikvah  
Roswell, GA

Rev. Jonathan Favors-Grimes  
Decatur, GA

Sister Sister Mary-Anne Plaskon  
Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas  
Columbus, GA

Ms. T Garmon  
Dawsonville, GA

Cameron Pennypacker  
Macon, GA

Prof. Dorothy Foster  
North Georgia Immigrant Justice  
Sautee Nacoochee, GA

Mr. Reche' Abdul-Haqq  
Norcross, GA

Kathryn Grant  
When Leaders Meet, Valdosta GA  
Valdosta, GA

Ms. Joyce Tripp Miller  
St. Aidan's Episcopal Church  
Alpharetta, GA

Mrs. Doris Mims  
Hampton, GA
Karen Leary
Glenn Memorial UMC
Atlanta, GA

Mrs. Leigh Walker
Atlanta, GA

Jules Auerbach
UUMAN
Cumming, GA

Ms. Karen Turney
Presbyterians for a Better Georgia
Atlanta, GA

Rebecca Stapel-Wax
Atlanta, GA

Alarce Lee
Lithonia, GA

Karma Russell
Lithonia, GA

Nancy Purdon`
Atlanta, GA

Edna Stephens
Grayson, GA

Dr. Anthony Stringer
Stone Mountain, GA

Todd Evans
Atlanta, GA

Ms. Johnnetter Stokes
Ray of Hope Christian Church
Decatur, GA

Emily Bagwell
Reconciling Ministries Network
Marietta, GA

Lorie Lewis
Atlanta, GA

Letitia Campbell
Atlanta, GA

Melinda Carter
Temple Sinai
Atlanta, GA

Ms. Alli Allen
Temple Sinai
Atlanta, GA

Mrs. Naomi Blass
Atlanta, GA

Ms. Leanne Rubenstein
Decatur, GA

Lesha Crocker
Columbus, GA

Sister Sister Arnold
Sister of Mercy
Savannah, GA

Valerie Kieffer
Temple Sinai
Atlanta, GA

Misty Lewis
Duluth, GA

Mr. Larry Pellegrini
Decatur, GA

Emma McNary
Lawrenceville, GA

Mrs. Joan Draughn
Hinesville, GA
Pam Litwin  
Temple Sinai Atlanta  
Marietta, GA  

Clevin Giles  
Ray Of Hope Christian Church  
Lithia Springs, GA  

Haley Stolp  
Advocates for Responsible Care  
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Atlanta, GA  

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Rabbi Rabbi Klensin  
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Atlanta, GA  

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Atlanta, GA  

Seth Cohen  
Temple Sinai  
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Patsy Smith  
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Rev. Susan Karlson  
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Toni Garmon  
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Suryani (Shauw Chin) Capps  
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
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Tuwan Ussery  
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Thomson, GA  

Rev. Thomas Hart  
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Andromeda Wilkerson  
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