



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS
EXECUTIVE

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For Release: August 19, 2009

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Civil Rights Urges Action In Wake Of Recent Alleged Bias Incidents

Lansing, MI – Kelvin W. Scott, Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR), has issued the following statement on behalf of the Department following recent alleged bias incidents in Portage and Independence Township. Last week a teen in Portage was attacked outside an apartment complex, allegedly because of his sexual orientation. Yesterday, an African American family in Independence Township found a burned cross outside their home. The burning of crosses is historically a symbol of racial hatred, intimidation and violence in this country.

“The Department of Civil Rights is very alarmed by the two recent alleged bias incidents on opposite sides of Michigan. While media coverage indicates that law enforcement in both areas has been responsive, we urge communities across the state to be proactive in confirming the intolerance of hate. Although we know that law enforcement and prosecutors must be allowed to discern the facts of the specific cases, we also know that even the appearance of hate is enough to cause lasting tensions within a community.

We urge local governments across the state to develop or update policies and ordinances that both confirm the acceptance of diversity and provide comprehensive protections for those within the jurisdiction. Such announcements would serve as a clear indication that public leaders understand the value of working together across personal backgrounds and will not stand for the criminal expression of prejudice.

We also urge communities to form or reinvigorate their own human relations commissions and support their work. Local education, economic, social, faith-based and community leaders must set a tone for appreciation in order to invite business and social investments from the best and brightest of all personal backgrounds.

Lastly, we urge the Michigan Senate to join the Michigan Sheriffs' Association, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan, and their colleagues in the Michigan House by passing HB-4836 and sending it to the Governor for her signature.

Michigan must remain committed to our common interest of recovery. Now is not the time to let those focused on hate and division to speak on behalf of our state.”

For more information on the Department of Civil Rights visit the Department's website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdcr>.

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