



**Statement for the “Valuing Black and Blue Lives Forum” at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Rock Tavern.**

Gatherings like these make us hopeful. The Orange County Human Rights Commission strongly believes in non-violent social change and peaceful community relations, and this Forum embodies every aspect of that. After an attack on the principles of what this congregation stands for, your leaders chose a response that included dignity and respect. They extended an invitation for dialogue to the ones who violated your space and property.

Today, the Commission stands firmly next to you in saying, we are a united community who believes in the importance of using our voice to help those who are part of marginalized groups. Our Brown, Black, and LGBTQ brothers and sisters need our support. They need allies who are willing to take risks like the ones this congregation has taken. Allies, who will proudly wave their flags of support, and open their doors for communication when their message is misunderstood. We will never be ok with someone being treated differently because of their skin color, religion, or who they chose to love. Our community welcomes everyone with open arms, and recognizes the need for standing up for those who are under attack. We are also grateful to the overwhelming majority of police officers, who so courageously wake up every morning and chose to serve and protect their community. We recognize what difficult jobs they have, and the sacrifices they and their families have to make. And let us be clear, Black lives matter will never mean Blue Lives don't. We value your lives. We value the commitment you've made to serve and protect every individual in this room and for that we thank you.

Today, we call on every person in this room to step back and reflect. What more can we do to become united? In these especially difficult times, we ask community leaders what more can we do to ensure unity and understanding amongst all groups? The Orange County Human Rights Commission understands the magnitude of this question and the responsibility we have to our constituents. We will continue to work hand in hand with you all to make sure that we are following through on our mission and endlessly work toward promoting mutual respect, equity, and humanity amongst all.