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Good morning.

My name is Betsy Palmieri. I am the director of the Hudson Valley Community Coalition. My organization works to build communities that foster social justice and cultural awareness. I am also the mother of two school age boys, and my parents' daughter.

I am not here this morning to support or oppose any candidate in the upcoming elections.

My purpose for being here today, is to share our collective outrage over the hateful and inflammatory messages being sent around in our communities, and to call on all political parties and candidates, to not only reject them, but to pledge not to use these tactics again.

My family and I spent some time with my Dad recently. Maybe because he is fighting late stage cancer, he shares more stories with my boys than usual. They often involve college football and fishing, two of his passions. But lately, a couple of the stories have had a common thread. He is with good friends, enjoying some adventure, when someone tells a racist "joke." For my Dad, that brings a very quick end to the enjoyment of the moment, and sometimes, to the friendship

as well. I'm sure my kids get the message loud and clear: **stand up for what you believe in, even if it makes waves.**

When we read these hateful words and see these racist, anti-immigrant political messages, it triggers the same reaction in my family that I'm guessing it does in many of yours. We think of our friends and our family members who are immigrants, and we are sickened.

Can we stand together as individuals, black, white, brown, documented and undocumented, who are also members of communities, and say that We Will Not Accept or Tolerate racist attacks against our brothers and sisters? Can we work together as communities, which are also part of nations, and say that our success depends on mutual respect and the recognition that every human being has value, that no person is "illegal?"

I think so. I hope you do, too.