

September 10, 2021

To: Elected Members of the North Smithfield School Committee  
P.O. Box 72  
Slatersville, RI 02876

cc: Anti-Defamation League  
605 Third Avenue New York, NY 10153

Chairman Lombardi, Vice-Chairwoman Meo, Secretary Votta, Mr. Connell and Mr. Jones:

We are writing to you about a statement that was made by a parent at the last school committee meeting. This letter serves as both a condemnation of not only the statement made at the August 17, 2021 North Smithfield School Committee meeting, but the lack of response to the statement. At one hour, eight minutes and forty seconds into the meeting, a parent stated: "I just want you to know that the Jews got on the bus willingly."

Due to the absence of denunciation from the committee, this incident was reported to the Anti-Defamation League whose mission is to "Stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all." The case number with the ADL involving this incident is 00070916. Upon reporting the incident, the ADL viewed the video of the August 17th meeting and responded:

ADL is deeply concerned with statements made at a North Smithfield School Committee on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 invoking the Holocaust (and in this situation, blaming the victims of the Holocaust) to oppose mask mandates. The absence of any criticism or concern over the use of that misguided analogy is all the more troubling. The comparison of mask mandates in schools to the events of the Holocaust is deeply offensive and inappropriate, and trivializes and delegitimizes the memory of victims and stories of survivors. Holocaust comparisons work to desensitize people to the actual events of the Holocaust, and move people to focus on sensationalized and inaccurate analogies such as this one instead of the actual issues being discussed. We oppose the offensive and unacceptable Holocaust comparisons that have been weaponized in conversations about vaccines and masks across the nation.

As educators in the North Smithfield School Department, it is, at the very least, both offensive and astonishing that this statement was made without any response whatsoever. Our students are taught to participate in debate with respect, decorum, civility, and decency. Using the victims of the Holocaust to make a point unrelated to the topic being discussed would not be tolerated in a

North Smithfield classroom and should not be met by the silence of the members of the committee. Public discourse lends itself to disagreement, but the egregious, appalling statement had no connection to the discussion being held. Hopefully, that will be the last time such a disgraceful statement will be made at a meeting. If that is not the case, please consider immediately condemning such heinous and disparate statements in the future.

Thank you,

Thank you,

Christina Welch / Christine Welch

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Justin Aromin

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Lindsay M. Aromin / Lindsay Aromin

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Jessica Camara / Jessica Camara

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Karen Budden / KB Budden

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Kimberly L. Rawson / KBRawson

North Smithfield High School Teacher

M. Harrison Hickon / M. H. Hickon

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Bronwyn Morrissey-Valorose / Bronwyn Morrissey-Valorose

North Smithfield High School Teacher

HEIDI MARTELL

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Jessica DeLappo

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Hannah Cerovi / Hannah Cerovi

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Julie M. Durand / Julie M. Durand

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Jessica Tuttle

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Melissa Rowse / Melissa Rowse

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Thomas F. Jean

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Natalie L. O'Brien

North Smithfield High School Teacher

Lita A. Motroni  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

Tracy L. Bailey-Hates  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

Ubi  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

John A. [Signature]  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

Lisa Cardin  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher

Rita M. Veini  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher

Lauren E. Nelson  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher

Quid K. Milner  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher

Justin [Signature]  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher

Tracy [Signature]  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher

Maureen  
North Smithfield High School Teacher

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North Smithfield High School Teacher