

News Release

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**JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER PITTSBURGH'S
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL CONDEMNS ANTI-SEMITIC REMARKS
BY GATEWAY SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR**

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Community Relations Council (CRC) condemns the anti-Semitic remarks made by a member of the Gateway Board of School Directors targeting Rabbi Barbara Symons. We are appalled by the actions of Steve O'Donnell, who has since resigned from the board. On separate occasions Mr. O'Donnell mocked the rabbi's yarmulke, declined to refer to her as "rabbi," and suggested that she felt superior to him because she is Jewish. When asked to apologize, O'Donnell refused and insisted that Rabbi Symons owed him an apology.

Additionally, we commend the Monroeville Interfaith Ministerium for speaking out against anti-Semitism and supporting Rabbi Symons, president of the ministerium. We are appreciative of Rev. Dr. David Morse, a member of the ministerium, who stated to the board of school directors: "An insult to any one of our religions is an insult to all of our religious faiths."

"It is disheartening to hear a public official use hateful language, particularly when he is elected to represent a community as diverse as Monroeville," said Cindy Goodman-Leib, chair of the Community Relations Council. "However, we should not judge an entire community based on the actions of a single individual. I applaud the strong group of interfaith leaders who came together to set a powerful example to let Monroeville know that hate will not be tolerated."

The Community Relations Council stands with Rabbi Barbara Symons, the Monroeville Interfaith Ministerium, and the Monroeville community as they continue their efforts to strengthen their community and combat bigotry through dialogue, outreach and understanding.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, one of 148 independent Federations associated with The Jewish Federations of North America, raises and allocates funds to build community locally, in Israel and around the world. With the vision of a thriving, vibrant and engaged Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh aims to carry out its work in the context of cooperation and inclusiveness. For more information, visit jfedpgh.org.

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