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## HAWAI'I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 30, 2018

### STATE CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION CHAIR EXPRESSES GRIEF AND OUTRAGE OVER ATTACK ON SYNAGOGUE

**HONOLULU** – Linda Hamilton Krieger, chair of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission, today issued the following statement:

The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission grieves with the Jewish community and the nation over the heinous attack and mass shooting of worshipers at the *Eitz Chayim* (Tree of Life) Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is heartbreaking to hear the news of this attack in a place of worship, reminiscent of recent mass shootings in the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in South Carolina and the Islamic Center of Quebec. The Pittsburgh synagogue attack is but one manifestation of a growing number of racist, xenophobic, anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate crimes in the U.S. and around the world.

We cannot ignore the climate and context that fosters hate and endangers lives, civil rights, and democracy. When elderly worshipers at Sabbath morning services are executed because of their synagogue's participation in a nearly 150-year-old refugee assistance program, when individuals and news organizations critical of the President are targeted with pipe bombs, we must recognize that thoughts and prayers are not enough. We must stand up and demand that our national leaders act to stop this rising tide of violence and hate. The President,

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members of the House and Senate, social media platform providers like Gab, and extremist cable news commentators must stop sending, re-sending, or standing silently by as others send thinly veiled messages of hate, inflaming violent action. Words have meaning, and people are dying. It has to stop.

It is no longer enough just to offer condolences. Hate speech and hate crimes are an imminent threat to any free democratic society. Hate speech and hate crimes violate the deepest values of aloha (loving compassion) and lōkahi (unity) that we in Hawai'i hold dear. The Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission calls on the people of Hawai'i to join together and stand against anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia, to condemn stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, in all their forms, wherever they are enacted, or enabled through silence.

The mission of the Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission is to eliminate discrimination by protecting civil rights and promoting diversity through enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and education. The Commissioners are: Chair Linda Hamilton Krieger and Commissioners Liann Ebesugawa, Joan Lewis, and Joakim Peter.

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