STATEMENT FROM MAYOR TOM BUTT REGARDING THE RECENT THREATS MADE AGAINST THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN RICHMOND

December 23, 2015

In response to the recent criminal threats made against our Muslim community, Mayor Tom Butt released the following statement:

“I commend the Richmond Police Department for their work in stopping what could have been a tragic attack in our community. I am very grateful that no one was hurt. We will continue to support our police department in their efforts to act upon any individual or group that seeks to terrorize or harm our residents. The police department is seeking to file the case against William Celli as a hate crime. As a city, we stand unwavering in our support for an inclusive and diverse community as we stand with our Muslim neighbors.

Clearly this threat had been influenced by the hateful and divisive rhetoric that is being used on a national level by presidential candidates. As we know, Richmond is one of many places across the country where similar threats and acts of violence have occurred. The disturbing proliferation of anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and all around ignorant displays of resentment for various groups of people, is impacting us all. It is unacceptable and together we can ensure that no community has to feel alienated or threatened like this again.

I know that we are a city full of people who treasure our diversity and actively seek to support each other. Incidents like this reinforce our values and remind us to remain committed to caring for and uplifting our neighbors on a daily basis. There is no place for hate in our city and no one should live under the threat of fear or bigotry. I encourage everyone to push back on the reactionary elements in our society that can culminate in thoughts of violence and promote discrimination.

Let it be known that we wholeheartedly support our Muslim community, and all those who wish to keep Richmond a safe and peaceful place for everyone.”

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