

STATEMENT PRESENTED TO BUFFALO COMMON COUNCIL JULY 22, 2002

To the Common Council and
Mayor Anthony M. Masiello
City of Buffalo

We are leaders who serve in a variety of capacities with various religious bodies within the City of Buffalo. We have gathered at the invitation of the Network of Religious Communities, an inter-denominational and interfaith association which includes a large number of congregations, synagogues, temples, churches, mosques and other houses of worship in this region.

We are writing to express our strongest and deepest concerns about the current controversy surrounding the reapportionment of the Common Council of the city of Buffalo. We are especially concerned about that situation in light of the issues of tension and trust which continue to affect race relations in our city.

We call upon each and all of you, as the elected leaders of our city, to address this situation with great sensitivity and scrupulous fairness toward the rights and needs of all our citizens, including especially those who are members of minority groups. We urge you, individually and together, to commit yourselves to seek a resolution to this matter that is – and is clearly perceived to be – in the best interests of all the citizens of our city.

We further call upon you to carry on the discussions and debates regarding this complex of issues in a way that treats all other parties to this matter with the kind of civility and respect which our citizens should be able to expect of their elected leaders.

It is our considered judgment that the plan proposed by the Citizens Advisory Commission on Reapportionment – which followed a clearly open and representative process in developing their recommendations – most nearly meets the criteria of sensitivity, inclusiveness and fairness that are of utmost importance to us as religious leaders in our community.

At a time when our community is beset by so many difficulties and challenges, we need only the very highest and best leadership from you, as you discharge the weighty responsibilities to which you have been elected.

In anticipation of your exhibiting that quality of leadership in addressing this particular matter, and with our pledge of respect and support as you do, we affix our names below:

Names of those signing the letter from the Network of Religious Communities
 (Organization names provided for identification purposes only)

Rev. Amos Acree	East Aurora Christian Church
Bishop LeRoy Anderson	Presiding Bishop, District #1, Church of God in Christ
Rev. Kathryn W. Baker	Pilgrim-St. Lukes United Church of Christ
Bishop J Michael Garrison	Episcopal Diocese of Western New York
Rev. Robert E. Grimm	Pilgrim-St. Lukes United Church of Christ
Rev. Adrian L. Blue	First Centennial Missionary Baptist Church
Pastor LaShelle Blue	Vision Cathedral Ministries
Pastor Jeffery Bowers	Love Alive Baptist Church
Rev. Dr. G. Stanford Bratton	Co-Executive Director, Network of Religious Communities
Pastor T. Anthony Bronner	ELIM Christian Fellowship
Rev. Herschel Chapman, Jr	New Hope Baptist Church
Deacon James Anderson	New Hope Baptist Church
Rev. Craig W. Douglass	African Methodist Ministers Alliance
Marlene Glickman	American Jewish Committee / Vice President, Network of Religious Communities
Rev. Dr. Robert L. Graham	St. Luke AME Zion Church
Bishop Nathan S. Halton	Faith Bible Tabernacle
Rev. Roderick Hennings	Zion Dominion Church of God in Christ
Sr. Catherine Hunt	Sisters of Mercy
Rev. James A. Lewis, III	J.W. Loguen Memorial AME Zion Church
Rev. Frances Manly	Western New York Unitarian Universalist Congregations
Rev. Francis X. Mazur	St. Gerards Roman Catholic Church / Co-Executive Director, Network of Religious Communities
Rev. Dr. David W. McKee	Presbytery of Western NY / V.P. Network of Religious Communities
Judy Metzger	Church Women United
Minister Halim Muhammad	Mosque #23
Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Neal	Western New York Churches in Covenant (UCC/DC)
Rev. Lloyd Noyes	American Baptist Churches
Rev. Paul Nevergold	St. Philips Episcopal Church
Shelia Nickson	Secretary, Network of Religious Communities
Rev. Darius Pridgen	True Bethel Baptist Church
Khalid Qazi, M.D.	President, American Muslim Council
Rabbi Henry Rosenfeld	Temple Beth Zion
Rabbi Jackie Mates-Muchin	Temple Beth Zion
Rev Merle Showers	Community Minister, Buffalo District, United Methodist Church
Dr. Surjit Singh	Niagara Frontier Sikh Society
Dr. Dilip Sinha	Hindu Cultural Society of Western New York
Rev. Richard Stenhouse	Bethel AME Church
Rev. Robert Williams	Presiding Elder, Rochester/Syracuse/Buffalo District, WNY Conference, AME Zion Church
Rev. Dr. Thomas H. Yorty	Westminster Presbyterian Church
Bishop Glenwood Young	Presiding Bishop, District #2, Church of God in Christ