



Good morning.

Thank you Madam President and Cook County Commissioners for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of Resolution 17-2103

“Condemning Hateful Acts of Violence and Rhetoric Directed at Jews and Muslims.”

My name is Barbara March Kantrow and I work at the American Jewish Committee. (AJC) AJC is a global Jewish Advocacy organization that was founded in 1906 by American Jews as a response to anti-Semitism in Russia. However, AJC quickly realized that in order to fight against anti-Semitism you also need to stand up for other group's rights as well.

Indeed it is a sad day in Cook County when a Resolution such as this one is needed. As a regular synagogue attendee it is dispiriting and unsettling to have to pass through extensive

security each time I visit my house of worship. This is an especially frightening message that my children receive about the lack of safety to practice their religion in America.

Unfortunately recent events have shown us all why this security is necessary to protect our community from those who wish to do us harm.

As Resolution 17-2103 so eloquently states, “Houses of worship and community centers should serve as a place of prayer, learning, refuge and peace, not of fear and hate.”

In 2016, hate crimes reached a 5 year high in Chicago. Anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate crimes also set a record high in 2016 and 2017 incidents are already outpacing last year’s reports of bias incidents.

At AJC we work tirelessly to strengthen relationships with our non-Jewish community partners- religious, Ethnic and international. There is strength in numbers and sadly right now we are all vulnerable.

I applaud the Cook County Commissioner's office for setting forth this important Resolution and I end with a quote from the late Rabbi Kook "I don't speak because I have the power to speak; I speak because I don't have the power to remain silent."

Thank you.