



ARLINGTON BRANCH #7047  
**NAACP**

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Karen Nightingale, Symone Walker, Esq.,  
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August 31, 2021

## ***PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING HATE SPEECH INCIDENT***

On Thursday, August 26, 2021, at 11:05 a.m., an Arlington County employee reported a Hate Speech incident to County Board Officials, the County Manager, the Chief Race and Equity Officer for Arlington County, and the Arlington Branch NAACP. As a result, a police report was filed on August 30, 2021, by the employee. In addition, the Arlington Branch NAACP intends to notify federal authorities. The incident occurred in the garage located at 2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Ellen M. Bozman Government Center (Courthouse Plaza). In emails shared with the County and NAACP, the employee who reported the hate speech said it best: "It seems because I reported it, and because I happen to be Black, I am seen as a single victim. I do not see myself in this way."

The Arlington Branch NAACP believes that every County employee who parks in that garage was 'victimized' by the hateful message. We strongly believe that a "KKK" message is meant as a message of hate and intimidation OR as a message of solidarity – there is no in-between.

Speech expressing hatred of a particular group of people is defined as "Hate Speech" and is not "Graffiti." The Arlington Branch NAACP condemns any form of Hate Speech and stands with the Black employees and any employee or citizen who reports Hate Speech. We are now aware County leadership intends to address the issue soon. Therefore, we are asking County leadership to immediately engage the workforce, sharing a powerful anti-discrimination message that clearly states hate speech has no place in our County – including our public areas or where we work. This kind of message will demonstrate solidarity with all who found the news hateful. Additionally, this will reinforce that we stand firm against all forms of hatred in our workplace and the community. However, sadly, the County missed the opportunities to get in front of this and, as of Monday evening, four days later, still had not addressed these concerns with its employees.

The Arlington Branch of the NAACP shares the whistleblower's sense of outrage. But unfortunately, this hate speech now permeates the County's workforce first by its mere presence in an area primarily frequented by its employees and second by the County's deflection and lack of an immediate and robust response.

The County has stated, "more is coming." But the post-George Floyd anti-racist playbook is clear. There should be no excuses, no pats on the back for past efforts, but rather an acknowledgment that racism and racial intimidation still exist in Arlington County, and it hurts-- All of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julius D. Spain Sr." in a cursive script.

Julius D. "J.D." Spain, Sr.  
Branch President