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December 17, 2021

Dear Trustee Conely and President Myers:

My office received several calls about the social media statement reportedly posted by Trustee Conley via email, whereby he invokes the name Hitler when referring to mask mandates. I am deeply disturbed the comment. Holocaust analogies or comparisons to Hitler are never appropriate unless the topic is World War II, Nazism, or actually referencing Hitler. We have seen a surge in the use of Hitlerian verbiage, and it is dreadfully wrong.

Calling someone Hitler only serves to downplay the Holocaust, and is deeply offensive to WWII survivors, as well as those who fought against the Nazis during World War II and it trivializes the memory of the millions of people who perished during the Holocaust.

The past two years have been difficult. While there is deep disagreement over COVID-19 masking (and vaccinations), connecting current health policies during a pandemic, with an administration seeking to commit mass genocide of targeted groups, is shameful.

We ask Trustee Conely to apologize for the post, and we ask the Brighton School Board to take up the cause to educate community members about the harm caused by invoking Hitler or other Holocaust analogies. School Board members must do their best to uplift civil and respectful discussions, no matter how cantankerous an issue is.

ADL was founded in 1913 with a timeless mission to protect the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all. We are a global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education, and fighting hate online. I am willing to answer any questions you may have about the work of the ADL, and I could also suggest resources if you like. My mobile number is 248-672-8831.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carolyn J. Normandin".

Carolyn Normandin  
Regional Director, ADL Michigan

Cc: Laura Mitchell, Bill Trombley, Angela Krebs, Ken Stahl, Alicia Reid