

The Honorable Virgil H. Goode, Jr.
70 East Court St., Suite 215
Rocky Mount, VA 24151

January 23, 2007

Dear Representative Goode:

We the undersigned represent a wide spectrum of Charlottesville area religious congregations and religiously affiliated groups who, in light of your recent statements about Muslims and the Qu'ran, feel compelled to express our views publicly.

Our country struggled for generations with instances of uncivil, hateful and violent behavior toward newcomers, be they Jewish, Irish, Italian or plenty of others whose ethnicities did not fit with some narrow view of what it means to be American. We believe in the religious freedom and tolerance that was firmly established by our forebears. We believe that the greatness of this nation is realized only when mutual understanding and the principles of (religious) freedom and tolerance are embraced. We are committed to building ever stronger, more wholesome and inclusive communities. Unfortunately, it would appear that you, Mr. Goode, do not share these beliefs and values.

As members of your constituency, we welcome the addition of Muslims to our community, and we pray that you, as a conscientious Representative, will support us in our efforts to foster an informed, engaged, and constructive constituency.

Signed

Rev. Leslie Takahashi-Morris, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church (UU)
Rev. David Takahashi-Morris, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church (UU)
Rev. Jim Baker, Westminster Presbyterian Church
Rabbi Daniel Alexander, Congregation Beth Israel
Rabbi Tom Gutherz, Congregation Beth Israel
Heena Reiter, Gesher Center for Jewish Spirituality
Rev. Sam Massey, First Presbyterian Church
Dr. Emaad Abdel-Rahman, Islamic Society of Central Virginia
Mr. Michael Kelley, Islamic Society of Central Virginia
Pastor Greg Anderson, Belmont Baptist Church
Fr. Gregory Kandt, Church of the Incarnation
Rev. Chris Morash, Church of the Incarnation
Ms. Rhonda Miska, Church of the Incarnation

Additional signatories of this letter include members of the Clergy and Laity for Peace and Justice Group:

Rev. Charles Perry
Rev. David McFarlane

Rev. David Poist
Rev. Roderick Sinclair
Rev. Jan Owen
Rev. Earl Hilgert
Rev. John Peale
Rev. David Wayland
Rev. Harold Horan
Rev. Anthony F. Perrino
Ms. Karen Friess Perrino
Mr. Edgar Hunter
Mr. Paul Saunier, Jr.
Mr. James Taylor Beard
Mr. David S. Warren
Ms. Elizabeth Burdash
Ms. Cynthia Ruhl