

Greater Des Moines Partnership
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Open letter to the Greater Des Moines Partnership:

We demand you cancel your candidate forum with Congressman Steve King.

This is not a political point of contention. This is a moral issue.

It has been only five days since 11 people were murdered in a synagogue in Pittsburgh. The victims of the Tree of Life shooting were killed by a gunman motivated by anti-semitism and white supremacist hatred of immigrants.

We are Iowans whose hearts ache for the grieving communities in Pittsburgh partially because the hate of the shooter is familiar to us – it is the same white supremacist hate embraced by Congressman Steve King, of Iowa's 4th District.

In this emotionally raw, tragic moment, we as Iowans are committed to fighting white supremacy and the violence it causes.

Steve King's white supremacist worldview is not new and it is not a secret. As Iowans we have become accustomed to writing King off as an embarrassment to our state. But King's comments are not merely offensive. His worldview is dangerous, and he is trying to make it a reality.

There are Jewish people in his district *right now* threatened by the people emboldened by Steve King. Religious minorities – in Iowa and across the country – are terrified to practice their religion. Steve King is one of the chief architects of this climate.

In fellowship and solidarity with the Jewish community of Pittsburgh and in Iowa, we as Iowans are committed to standing up against hate, standing up against white supremacy, and standing up against religiously and racially motivated violence and those who promote these evils. But apparently the business community of Greater Des Moines didn't get the memo.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership knows who Steve King is.

The Tree of Life shooter and Congressman Steve King share a worldview. The shooter and King share and spread a common fear of migrants as “invaders” and they both direct their rage at the immigration lawyers who protect them.

This is the man that the Greater Des Moines Partnership has invited here today. This is the man they are granting the privilege of speaking with some of the most prominent business leaders in Iowa: a man who has exhibited all the red flags of the Tree of Life shooter.

The Greater Des Moines Partnership has committed a moral failure by amplifying America’s highest profile white supremacist just five days after the Tree of Life Massacre.

The Partnership claims it is trying to be neutral. There is no such thing. If the Partnership goes through with hosting Steve King, it will be a statement of radicalism. You are asking members to push out the tragedy in Pittsburgh, and listen quietly to King, who spouts the same ideology that animated the killer’s rampage. In this moment, no one can deny that the Partnership hosting King today is, in fact, not neutral – it is an extreme choice, an immoral choice.

The Partnership says they are promoting civil discourse. It is far beyond the bounds of civility to provide a platform to a white supremacist worldview that left 11 people dead five days ago.

The right thing to do is obvious. Cancel the event.

This is a moral issue and a wake up call. Even those who spent years turning a blind eye to King’s explicit white supremacist worldview for their own profit have read the seriousness of the moment and cut ties with King. Intel, Land O’ Lakes, Purina, and NCTA have stopped supporting King. Even the National Republican Congressional Committee explicitly condemned King’s white supremacy.

You have a choice: You can cancel the event and join the growing chorus of businesses and Republicans denouncing King. Or you can open your doors, set up the chairs, turn on the microphones, and join the Tree of Life gunman and Steve King in their white supremacist project.

As Iowans standing in solidarity against racially motivated violence, we are committed to honoring the memory of the dead in the Tree of Life Synagogue killing. And for the victims of the Tree of Life massacre and all those living in fear of white supremacist violence, we remember what you do in this moment.

Members of Iowa CCI Action