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Statement from Kent County Board of Commissioners Chair Mandy Bolter and Vice-Chair Stan Stek and County Administrator Wayman Britt Denouncing Hate Speech, Violence and the Actions Against the Governor

Tragically, it has become a regular part of our national rhetoric to openly express hate and to use that hate speech as a rallying cry to incite violence against those who are different or who hold opposing views. This is not only morally indefensible, but it erodes the very health of our democracy. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness depend on our willingness to condemn rather than advocate for hate and violence against anyone for any reason.

Yesterday, the people of Michigan – and across our nation – were stunned to learn that violent extremists driven by hate had plotted to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, bomb a highway bridge, storm our state Capitol and incite a “civil war.”

We strongly condemn these actions. We also offer our best wishes to the Governor and her family and our gratitude to the law enforcement agencies that uncovered this plot.

Freedom, equality and respect for diverse thought are bedrock principles that made the United States a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. More than ever, we must remember that these principles unify us as citizens, even when debating the toughest issues.

West Michigan has long shown that we can disagree and still respect and care for each other as fellow community members. Hate and violence have no place here, and it is incumbent upon all of us to denounce these offenses.

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