



LAWYERS' COMMITTEE  
FOR CIVIL RIGHTS AND  
ECONOMIC JUSTICE  
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September 12, 2017

Mayor Charlene Lovett  
Claremont City Hall  
58 Opera House Square  
Claremont, NH 03743

Police Chief Mark Chase  
Claremont Police Department  
58 Opera House Square  
Claremont, NH 03743

**Re: Racial Violence in Claremont**

Dear Mayor Lovett and Chief Chase:

We are deeply concerned with the recent incident of racial violence – reminiscent of lynching – that took place in Claremont, New Hampshire, where a biracial eight year-old boy was pushed off a table with a rope around his neck by white teenagers who hurled racial epithets at the child as he was hanging. We urge you to conduct a robust and transparent public investigation that will hold the responsible racist parties accountable for attacking and injuring a child based on his race. Additionally, Claremont officials must condemn all forms of identity-based violence, and proactively work to fully eradicate this reprehensible bigotry from the community.

Notably, we underscore that media reports indicate the existence of strong evidence that the Claremont attackers were “substantially motivated to commit the crime because of hostility towards the victim’s ... race.” 4 NH RSA 651:6 I(f). As such, we urge the Claremont Police Department to treat this violent incident as a hate crime. Failure to protect the biracial survivor will leave Claremont open to equal protection liability under federal and state laws. In that regard, we are profoundly troubled by media reports that Chief Chase appeared to discount the severity of this incident by referring to the perpetrators’ actions as “mistakes they make as a young child.” Under the law, it is your duty to ensure that people of color – not the perpetrators of racial violence – feel safe and protected in Claremont. The failure to act will erode already tenuous trust between law enforcement and communities of color.

We are requesting an emergency meeting with you to discuss this matter in greater detail. We can be reached at (617) 988-0624 and we look forward to your prompt response.

Respectfully submitted,

IVAN ESPINOZA-MADRIGAL ESQ.  
Executive Director

OREN N. NIMNI, ESQ.  
Civil Rights Fellow

Cc: Attorney General Gordon MacDonald  
Claremont City Council