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Date: May 10, 2021 at 2:15:39 PM EDT

To: Michelle Crocker <mcrocker@leelanau.gov>, Chet Janik <cjanik@leelanau.gov>

Subject: Please forward to all commissioners

These words were written by Commissioner William Bunek in May of 2021. "If re-elected, I will work to promote diversity, inclusion, equality and equity in all aspects of county government. These goals will be accomplished through providing, supporting and participating in the necessary professional developmental anti-bias training for elected officials and all county employees as has been stated in Leelanau County Resolution #2020- 014. Recently, as commissioner, I have learned that there are certain types of racism that people do not wish to discuss publicly. How will these kinds of racism be resolved if open dialogue is not allowed?"

I am struck by the discrepancy between the above statement and the prayer resolution recently introduced by Commissioner Bunek. The commissioners, as representatives of the Leelanau populace, are spending public time to institute an implicitly biased process for determining who is allowed to say the opening prayer. The bias comes from the fact that only folks from certified churches in Leelanau would be allowed to give the benediction. It turns out that every established church in Leelanau County is Christian.

Yet there are folks of other faiths in Leelanau County. Wouldn't the "diversity" and "inclusion" which Bunek rightly values apply to them, as well? The Board needs to either open up the opportunity for giving a benediction to folks of all faiths, or else withdraw the resolution. The BOC is not a religious institution. It's supposed to represent *all* citizens of Leelanau County.