



*“One Nation Working Together,
For Justice and Equality
Everywhere”*

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**Berkshire County Branch of the NAACP (BCB NAACP)
proclamation in support of the proposed homeless shelter at the
First United Methodist Church**

As we observe the local conversation about the proposed homeless shelter to be created at the First United Methodist Church continue, we at the BCB NAACP feel compelled to speak out.

Pittsfield’s homeless/houseless population and their struggles should not, and should never, be seen as avoidable or dismissible. The frequent narrative that the people who would use the shelter would pose a hazard to nearby businesses is frankly disturbing and disregards our collective responsibility to our most vulnerable neighbors. We as a community will be ultimately judged on how we treat those in need of help and support.

The homeless/houseless community is not a monolith, they do not all share the same backgrounds or reasons for being in their situation, but they are all human and have the inalienable rights to be treated decently and be afforded real opportunities to better themselves and their situations.

We are confident that the First Methodist Church and ServiceNet will endeavor to create a space that will provide the necessary support for those that find themselves in the unfortunate situation of not having shelter.

The current COVID-19 crisis should awaken us all to the reality that catastrophe can befall us very quickly. It behooves us as a community to craft solutions that minimize the suffering of our neighbors and put us on the path to eradicate homelessness in our city.

Sincerely,

President Dennis Powell and the Executive Committee of the Berkshire County Branch of the NAACP.