

As citizens and persons of faith, we believe that robust public dialogue is at the foundation of American democracy. We also believe that all people are created in the image of the Divine and deserve to be treated with dignity.

In this context, it is imperative that all viewpoints be shared and received in a spirit of respectful consideration.

The health of our democracy depends on the ability of all individuals to express their concerns to an elected representative in an open and respectful atmosphere. Taunts, jeers or disruptive behavior in public forums will only serve to reduce the quality of public discussion, thereby reducing the value of the public input to help Congress make their decisions.

When an important vehicle for the democratic process is in danger of being derailed by a disruptive few, we need to speak out.

How we participate as citizens is not only important in addressing today's issues; we are also teaching the next generation about how to participate appropriately in a democracy.

A petition to this effect is on our Web site. Emoregon.org, has already gathered more than 40 signatures from faith leaders and concerned citizens.

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