

Local educator targeted with hate-fueled vandalism

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FRANCONIA — In a disturbing incident that occurred over the weekend, Jill Brewer, Chair of the Franconia Select Board, Profile School counselor, and co-advisor of the school's pride group, discovered her mailbox smashed and vandalized with hate speech. The incident occurred at Brewer's residence, leaving behind a poorly executed swastika, offensive language, and the defacement of an "Everyone Belongs" yard sign with red spray paint.

The act of vandalism is believed to have occurred overnight. Brewer and her family were at home during the incident, and the discovery was made the following morning as they were leaving for breakfast.

Brewer expressed her dismay over the incident. She reflected on the emotional toll of dealing with such incidents repeatedly and the disheartening persistence of bigotry in the community.

"This was not the Sunday morning message we expected to see on our mailbox, but the poorly executed vandalism only makes us more committed to equality, freedom, and the belief that everyone belongs in the North Country, even the cowardly bigots, provided they abide by the law," Brewer stated. "Sunlight is the best disinfectant; unfortunately, it's behavior that is enabled by



COURTESY

Jill Brewer, Chair of the Franconia Select Board and a local educator, discovered her mailbox bashed and marked with a swastika and derogatory language early Sunday morning. The incident is believed to be targeted, and an investigation is underway.

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The incident has also impacted Brewer's family, including her children, aged eight, 11, and 13. The children were reportedly shocked and disturbed by the discovery. Brewer's husband, Adam Nyborg, also expressed his thoughts about the incident.

"This vandalism seems targeted, either at the Everyone Belongs sign or at my family, for our mildly outspoken liberal values. In either case, it feels political," said Nyborg. "Diversity of political opinion is essential, but when a political opinion inclines people to swastikas and hate speech, it should be shunned. It's hateful and ignorant behavior. Unfortunately, it's behavior that is enabled by

our state Senator Carrie Gendreau and Donald Trump and other right-wing extremists."

Local law enforcement, led by Franconia Police Chief Mac Cashin and Officer Nate Hamilton, is actively investigating the incident. Brewer discussed the possibility of the vandalism being targeted and emphasized the need for the community to stand against such acts of hatred and intolerance.

Addressing the question of pressing charges if the culprits are identified, Brewer expressed a nuanced perspective. She emphasized the importance of education alongside punitive measures, especially if the offenders are teenagers. Brewer highlighted the need for the community



COURTESY

A Franconia family discovered a vandalized mailbox and "Everyone Belongs" yard sign over the weekend in what was believed to be a targeted incident.



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Franconia Select Board Chair and Profile School Counselor Jill Brewer was the target of hate speech over the weekend when an unknown assailant beat in her mailbox with a blunt object and spray painted a swastika and derogatory words on it, as well as an "Everyone Belongs" yard sign.

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ner are determined to respond by reaffirming their commitment to equality and freedom. They plan to repair and paint a rainbow on the mailbox as a symbol of resilience. Brewer emphasized the need for the community to remain steadfast in its support for LGBTQ rights and religious freedom and condemned the act as unacceptable.

"It's like what's happening globally and in the Middle East. You hear about really awful things happening to not only the Jewish people in our country but also Muslim people who are being targeted in a hateful way. And then to have that the white supremacy component from someone local, who unfortunately represents us at this current moment in the State House, literally brings that home and makes our Jewish neighbors very uncomfortable. And, you know, it may be the same for our Muslim neighbors as well," noted Brewer.

The incident adds to a series of similar occurrences in the community, contributing to a growing sense of unease.

Brewer remarked, "It's really unsettling. It's not who we are."

