

Dear Friends,

As I am sure many of you are aware, last Sunday there was an inflammatory incident in front of Portland's Brownstone Intermediate School. People were protesting the Portland school system's compliance with state guidelines that require staff and students to wear masks inside school buildings. The protest took on an anti-Semitic and particularly odious tone by comparing school administrators to Hitler.

Local and state officials were quick to respond including Connecticut Attorney General, William Tong, who stated: "*Hitler killed 11 million people, including 6 million Jews, in one of the worst human rights atrocities known to man. Masks are safe, effective, and save lives. There is no comparison and to draw that false parallel is hateful, ignorant, and repugnant.*"

In view of the Sunday protestors' derogatory and disrespectful rhetoric, I couldn't help but think about World War II and all the service personnel who sacrificed so much in order to fight Hitler and the Nazis.

As we anticipate Memorial Day Weekend, we honor the sacrifices that members of the United States military – including many Portland residents – have made over the generations. While we never glorify war, we continue to give thanks for those who – in Abraham Lincoln's words in the Gettysburg Address – "*gave the last full measure of devotion*" in order to protect liberty and justice for all.

May we continue to uphold the values we cherish and the vision we embrace to be free of all forms of bigotry, discrimination, and hatred. Our Christian faith demands nothing less.

Yours in faith and hope,  
Jane