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of Northern California

United Way Statement on Racial Slur at Shasta Supervisors Meeting

REDDING, CA (May 31, 2023) – The Board of Directors of United Way of Northern California (UWNC) issued the following statement today:

“Media outlets report that at the Shasta County Board of Supervisors meeting on May 30, the Board Chair failed to forcefully admonish or remove a citizen who, while addressing the chamber, used the word “n-----.” The Board Chair justified this inaction on the grounds of protecting the speaker’s First Amendment rights. Instead, the Board Chair ordered the removal from the chamber of a gentleman who spoke out in protest of the use of the word. The Board then allowed the original speaker to address the chamber for a second time. Some people “left the chamber, saying they could not believe the board was allowing him to speak again,” the Record Searchlight reported.

“United Way of Northern California is deeply concerned about this incident and the way it was handled by the Board. UWNC stands firmly against racism and bigotry in all forms. Further, the agency believes public discourse that is free from divisive and intimidating rhetoric is essential if our communities are to deal effectively with the challenges of today’s society.

“Americans’ right to free speech doesn’t mean anyone can say anything they want at any time in a public setting. Indeed, allowing the use of racial slurs creates an intimidating environment that inhibits free speech, not promotes it. United Way of Northern California believes the Shasta County Board of Supervisors, and all government bodies, have the responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment for all constituents.

“UWNC seeks to bring together people of all backgrounds to create solutions that improve the quality of life in the North State. We call on our public officials to take actions that promote unity in our communities – not create hate, divisiveness, and mistrust.”

About United Way of Northern California:

United Way of Northern California (UWNC) was established in Redding in 1953 and serves nine counties: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity. Its mission is to fight for the education, income and health of all residents in the community, and to assist the community during times of crisis. UWNC is active in disaster relief and recovery, raises funds for non-profit agencies, and operates three 24/7 human services helplines: 2-1-1 Shasta, 2-1-1 Siskiyou, and 2-1-1 Tehama, collectively known as 2-1-1 NorCal. For more information about United Way of Northern California visit www.norcalunitedway.org.