



Dear Urth Caffé customers, friends, and neighbors,

First of all thank you for your past and continuing support. It means the world to my wife Jilla and our amazing workforce, as well as myself. As you may have heard we were recently sued by a group of Muslim women claiming we discriminated against them. In order to better understand our position, and us, we believe it's important that we provide some context for our lives, our mission and this situation. That is the purpose of this letter.

Let me assure you that these accusations are absolutely false and we remain confident that when the whole truth is known we will be completely vindicated. My wife, Jilla Berkman, is a Muslim woman and I am a Jewish man. From the moment we created Urth Caffé, our mission was to provide a warm and welcoming place where people of all religions, races, sexual orientations and beliefs can come together and find a quiet moment, a delicious, organic cup of coffee and a respite from the busy and demanding world we all live in.

A large percentage of our customers, particularly at our Laguna Beach location, are Muslims. We're hearing from many of these customers about how much they love Urth Caffé, how they appreciate our commitment to embracing diversity and how they plan to stand by us.

During times when our outdoor area is full, we are forced to limit the time customers can stay seated so we can accommodate more people and be fair to everyone. We call this our '45-minute rule', which our employees advise all of our customers of when they take their orders. Understand that we are a cafe and not a full-service restaurant. Our offerings are beverages, soups, salads and sandwiches—light fare that can reasonably be consumed in the time allotted. There are often empty seats indoors, but most customers prefer being outdoors in the beautiful California climate. This particular group of customers wouldn't move when asked and that is the reason—the only reason—they were asked to leave.

Jilla and I are deeply sensitive to the hatred and bigotry that has been thrown into the political process and our culture. It sickens us. We have always believed that Urth Caffé is a living testament to the fact that we have much more that binds us than separates us, and in that way it makes a positive statement about diversity and acceptance. We find this incident both sad and frustrating in that they chose one of the most welcoming and diverse businesses in the area to target with their political agenda.

What they are claiming is not us, not our employees and not our history. It might be easier and cheaper to settle this case but I refuse to give in when people try to spread falsehoods that tarnish our business and our reputation. I know the truth as do our customers and employees and we will fight as hard as we can to ensure that it gets out there and we are not harmed or defined by this incident.

Again, Jilla and I, as well as all of our employees, thank everyone for their support and the chance to share our perspective on this situation. We hope to quickly put this behind us so we can get back to serving the best organic heirloom coffees, fine teas and healthy cuisine to our loyal clientele

With respect and gratitude,

Shallom Berkman