

June 1, 2020

**To Columbus City Council President Shannon G. Hardin, and Council Members Elizabeth Brown, Mitchell Brown, Rob Dorans, Shayla Favor, Emmanuel V. Remy and Priscilla Tyson:**

We write to unequivocally support the Resolution put forward by Council Member Priscilla Tyson, declaring Racism to be a Public Health Crisis. We support the Resolution because we are profoundly outraged and heartbroken that our fellow citizens continue to see themselves in the anguished face of George Floyd pleading for air under the knee of a white man sworn to protect; hear themselves in the nervous voice of Christian Cooper, a bird-watcher whose skin tone is suddenly used to falsely suggest he is a threat; and, in the experiences of countless more Americans of color, so frequently demeaned, threatened and physically harmed.

We hope and believe the Resolution will appropriately bring increased government and private-sector attention to these persistent and systemic issues.

We are proud to call the City of Columbus home – and prouder still that Columbus is coming together to find ways to deal unflinchingly with the role racism plays in undermining public health, and seeking solutions for what have felt for too long like intractable issues. Because racial prejudice is most harmful when it is held by people in positions of power, we believe it is incumbent on those of us in positions of some level of power to speak out. We are concerned that a lack of publicly-stated outrage by us makes racial animosity – or indifference – socially acceptable.

The undersigned are Democrats and Republicans and Independents from across the political spectrum. We write this letter together because the issue about which we write is not a political one, and we recognize that our country's most basic democratic ideals are threatened when we further head in the wrong direction on issues of basic human rights.

We urge other Columbus business leaders to join us in acknowledging the scourge of racism and supporting our City's efforts to address its impact on public health. Our community needs to know we are fighting for it to be more just and fair and safe. We write knowing all too well that our glass houses are not perfect. There is work to be done in our organizations, and in our own leadership. But we are committed to that work. And together we believe in and will work for an America that can – and must – do far better to provide basic human rights protections, create a level playing field, and easier paths to the American dream. We believe this Resolution is an important step in recognizing the need for change.

Sincerely,

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