



Dear friends,

The peaceful demonstrations on Saturday that sadly transitioned into violence highlighted long felt pain and suffering throughout our community. The pandemic created greater awareness of these issues. The tragic killing of George Floyd and the resulting demonstrations focused our consciousness on them. We join our voices today to speak out against racism and injustice and to commit to fostering more equitable communities throughout Northeast Ohio.

We acknowledge that many in Greater Cleveland are working tirelessly to deconstruct structural and systemic racism. And we know that the structural racism evolved through our nation's history is the root of the wealth gap; the disparities in health outcomes; the unconscionable mortality rate for babies of color; the lack of access to quality education; and the dearth of economic opportunities. And while many are deeply committed to addressing these problems, we are far from solving them. We know that we must do better. We know that we must all acknowledge our shared history is a history of systems that perpetuate injustice. We know that we must summon our citizens to dismantle these systems, rectify injustices, and grow opportunities for an equitable society.

We are capable of radically changing our behavior. The pandemic taught us that. We are capable of behavior grounded in courage, kindness, and compassion. The pandemic taught us that, too. Now, it is time to apply these lessons from the viral pandemic to the pandemic of racism that plagues our city and our nation. We must fight for justice and behavioral change with the same rigor and valor that we battle the Coronavirus. We must do so with a peaceful spirit—fueled as it might be by our passion, anger, and outrage. We must listen to one another rather than drown out each other's voices. We must embrace the humility of our shared humanity.

We ask you to commit, with us, to this work. We ask you to commit to engaging and collaborating with efforts currently underway to advance equity and inclusion. We believe we can become the city and the communities we aspire to be—where we are genuinely committed to justice, equity, and opportunity for all our citizens.

The time to act to move our city forward is now. We are prepared to act. You can take the first step by signing the Pledge to Promote Equity and Inclusion in my Community. A copy of which follows this letter.

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