



## **FALLS CHURCH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STATEMENT ON ANTIDISCRIMINATION**

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**July 14, 2020 – Falls Church, Virginia** – We at the Falls Church Chamber of Commerce understand that we are in a pivotal moment in our society that calls for strong antiracism efforts. Together, we will join other voices working toward social justice for the betterment of our citizens, our community, and our country.

We strongly support the right of those who protest peacefully and applaud the many who have done so in seeking to bring about needed change. While much of the recent protests have focused on the unjustified killing of George Floyd, the problem is much larger than the death of one man. There is a clear cry resonating for improvements to our legal, criminal justice, economic, educational, and electoral systems in a way that benefits all segments of society.

As an organization that has played a prominent role in greater Falls Church's community and business affairs for more than 70 years, the Chamber recognizes its obligation to speak out and acknowledge the negative role persistent discrimination has played in history. Discrimination and racism dates back to our nation's origins and, while progress has been made since that time, the recent events underscore the need for greater urgency in redressing this issue, and there is a pressing need to end all traces of discrimination.

We at the Chamber strongly condemn acts of racial injustice, and we remain committed to being part of the fight against racism. As business leaders, we also recognize that racial equality necessarily imparts the need for economic equality. Racism, in all facets of life, harms our nation's economic competitiveness. It also imposes tremendous burdens upon those discriminated against, and we stand ready to pursue meaningful changes to support those who have been disenfranchised.

The Chamber is guided by its mission to promote local business interests and foster economic prosperity and civic well-being in the greater Falls Church community. Our mission calls upon us to be "action oriented" and, going forward, we will actively promote this mission by deepening our long-held commitment to diversity and inclusion and by finding new ways to listen, understand, and build unity.

To that end, we call on businesses and members of our community to diligently work to end discrimination, ignorance, and intolerance. We must listen to anti-discrimination organizations,

such as the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation and its Social Justice Committee, for greater understanding of the issues and the solutions they propose.

We support George Floyd's family's call to create a national task force to address racial inequity in our criminal justice system. We also support the City of Falls Church's efforts to establish a Use of Force Review Committee and Fairfax County's existing Use of Force Review Subcommittee to identify areas in need of correction. Bringing about healing to our country and restoring trust in our police are impossible without greater transparency from investigations into police misconduct and increased accountability for those involved.

We are committed to working with our elected officials and other stakeholders to take concrete steps to create a business climate in Falls Church that better promotes economic inclusion and equal opportunity, empowering a diverse community of business owners, residents, workers, and visitors. This includes efforts through the Chamber's Diversity Inclusion Initiative to bring new businesses and jobs to our underserved communities and professional development and networking opportunities to minority business leaders.

The Chamber recognizes the importance of economic inclusion and the power of our collective voices when we unite. Our region's greatest strength is its diversity, and we pledge our best efforts to eliminate racism in all facets of society and work towards a more just and equitable society for all.

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