

To the chairman Senator Burke and the Committee.

As we look at the complexity of the current state of affairs in our country we are required as leaders to move with the courage bestowed upon us from those they began this fight before we were ever here. Today, many black Ohioans are not ok, they are logged in at work but checked out mentally.

This is not just about the activities of the last few weeks but it's the compounding of a system of racism that we see on display daily. Many of us deal with microaggressions from our bosses, from the store clerk, from the stewardess, from the passing by strangers that are threatened or inconvenienced by our presence.

We are taught to just let it go, move on, pick your battles but when you hit a war like what we've seen play out, the collective black community cannot breathe and not because we have a literal knee on our neck, it's the systemic knee.

We have lots of work to do and as a member of the founding working group that successfully helped the city of Cleveland name Racism as a Public Health Crisis, I call on the leaders of the Ohio Legislature to do the same. We cannot solve a problem if we refuse to name it. By calling out racism for what it is, Ohio can begin to see progress for all of its citizens.

Humbly Submitted,

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