



Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Issues Statement in Regard to Racial Justice

June 12, 2020

As members of the Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights¹, we are deeply saddened by the deaths of Mr. George Floyd, Ms. Breonna Taylor, Mr. Ahmaud Arbery and so many others throughout our country and here in Tennessee who have been the victims of racial injustice and police brutality. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and grieve for their loss. We mourn these precious lives taken before their time. Like others around the country and the world, we are appalled by the cruelty, injustice and despair surrounding the circumstances of their deaths.

These past few weeks have exposed the incalculable cost of a society scarred by racism, racial hatred, police violence, and the systematic disenfranchisement and violation of the civil rights of Black people and communities of color throughout our nation's history. As people from all backgrounds have taken to the streets to protest day after day, we are reminded of this painful history and the substantial work we all need to do, together, to ensure that the promise of our country's Constitution is guaranteed and protected for all.

As the eyes and ears of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in Tennessee, the advisory committee has as its mission to investigate the deprivation of civil rights on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin or in the administration of justice. To that end, we have focused our recent work on issues of racial and economic equity and fairness in our Tennessee justice system, including restoration of voting rights, civil asset forfeiture, and penal debt. Our committee has worked with Tennessee legislators, community organizations, law enforcement and the justice system to deepen the understanding of civil rights in our state and to progress reform. But more needs to be done.

As volunteers serving on the advisory committee, we commit to redoubling our efforts to work towards a fairer, safer and more equal Tennessee for all, where we can rightfully celebrate the fullest attainment of the country and state's highest ideals. In the months and years ahead, the advisory

¹ At the June 12, 2020 Meeting of the Tennessee Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights the Committee approved this statement by a vote of 8 - 0.

committee will work to investigate, understand and report on issues that impact the civil rights of people of color, marginalized individuals and others experiencing deprivation of their civil rights. We are committed to ending the atrocity of systemic racism.

In honor of Mr. Floyd, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Arbery and countless others, we stand steadfastly with Tennesseans in pursuing our work and in contributing as best we can to bend the arc of history towards a better future for us all.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights.

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