June 2, 2020

A JOINT STATEMENT FROM MEMBERS OF THE WORCESTER TOGETHER COALITION

Together we rise, together we stand, and together we change. On behalf of the Worcester Together Coalition, comprising more than 100 individuals and organizations formed in response to the COVID-19 crisis, we rise and we stand in condemnation of the brutal acts perpetrated by Minneapolis police officers in the murder of George Floyd. We stand in the name of countless Black lives lost at the hands of police and civil vigilantes and in the name of all Communities of Color that have and continue to experience institutional inequity and brutality. We seek to create and make change to shift the oppressive imbalances in our country in the name of all Communities of Color that have experienced profound loss including for George Floyd, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Alton Sterling, Sandra Bland, Botham Jean, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and for whom their families and communities have endured deep pain, anger, frustration, and fear because of systemic racism and inequity.

Silence is not an option. Action is paramount. Worcester Together has demonstrated our ability to act and respond in crisis through COVID-19. Today, we speak aloud in disgust and with deep sorrow for our community and our country, and to leverage our collective and unified power to act and make change. The devastating racial disparities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic are intrinsically related to our nation’s history of white supremacy and structural racism. It is a legacy that we must reject and dismantle. As we seek to address the COVID-19 crisis and to build a fair and just “new normal” we commit ourselves to these principles in all that we do, both individually and collectively:

1. We will acknowledge the reality of white supremacism in our history and its insidious presence in our institutions, public school system, police department, community based organizations, and ways of doing business and will facilitate courageous conversations and frank discussion of the issues at hand as a community. We will recognize our inadvertent complicity in the perpetuation of this injustice.
2. We will approach every initiative, policy or program that we undertake as an opportunity to dismantle racism. We will do this explicitly and embrace accountability for our results.
3. We will consistently and promptly identify, name, question, and actively resist and denounce policies in our criminal justice, law enforcement, education and health institutions that injure people of color and deprive them of the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our community.
4. We will center, elevate and defer to voices of People of Color and support the economic advancement of Communities of Color by using our collective purchasing power to support locally owned Black, Latino, and immigrant businesses.

We are fallible humans acting in the name of humanity and cannot do this work alone. Please join us as we work together to create equity, shape and change our community and our country’s course.

The Worcester Together Coalition as signed by:

Action! by Design
Alex M. Mooradian, Esq.
Ascentria Care Alliance
MassHIRE, Worcester and Southbridge Career Centers
Mayor Joseph M. Petty
Mission E4
Billy Fitzpatrick, College of the Holy Cross, 2020
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor
Boys & Girls Club of Worcester
Central Mass Housing Alliance
CENTRO
Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester
Coghlin Electrical Contractors, Inc.
Coghlin Network Services, Inc.
Congressman Jim McGovern
Department of Children and Families, Worcester East
Department of Youth Service, Central Region
Dress for Success Worcester
Ed Augustus, City Manager, Worcester
Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center
Edward Street Child Services
Emma Davison, College of the Holy Cross, 2021
Face Mask Working Group - Mutual Aid Worcester
Friendly House
Gina Plata-Nino, Esq.
Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Habitat for Humanity MetroWest/Greater Worcester
HOPE Coalition
Jeremiah's Inn
Joe Ertle, College of the Holy Cross
Kimberly Salmon, Worcester Resident
Latino Education Institute
Legendary Legacies Inc
Living In Freedom Together-LIFT
Love Your Labels
Main South Community Development Corporation
Mark Richman, Professor, WPI
Open Sky Community Services
Organization for Nonprofit Excellence (ONE Worcester)
Pernet Family Health Service
Project New Hope Inc.
Quinsigamond Community College
Regional Environmental Council of Central MA
Senator Ed Markey
Senator Harriette L. Chandler
Seven Hills Foundation & Affiliates
Southeast Asian Coalition
Straight Ahead Ministries
The Clemente Course in the Humanities, Worcester
The Guild of St. Agnes
The Hanover Theatre and Conservatory for the Performing Arts
Together for Kids Coalition
UMass Memorial Health Care
United Way of Central Massachusetts
Worcester Chamber Music Society/Neighborhood Strings
Worcester Community Action Council
Worcester Cultural Coalition
Worcester Education Collaborative
Worcester Family Partnership
Worcester Housing Authority
Worcester Interfaith
Worcester Public Schools
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce
Worcester State University
Worcester Telegram and Gazette
YMCA OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
YWCA Central Massachusetts