



May 29, 2020

For Immediate Release

Protests held in Columbus last evening were sparked by a number of racist incidents, most notably the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The following is a statement of Stephanie Hightower, President & CEO of the Columbus Urban League.

“I have always sought to ensure my public statements demonstrated clarity, thoughtfulness and respect for those with differing views. You often cannot inspire, motivate or persuade when people won’t listen.

“That said, recent racist incidents and violence demand direct language. The hard truth must be said. America stands at a crossroads. The choice is clear – do we have the will and the determination to finally rise above four hundred years of bigotry and racism?

“We cannot move fast enough to embrace personal and collective change. As our young emerging leaders remind us, our inaction and intolerance are literally choking the promise of freedom, the essential essence that launched and guided us throughout our history.

“I cannot and do not condone intentional damage to property. But I can affirm that the literal and figurative incidents of lynching will provoke outrage. It does not matter if injustices come packaged as overt acts or implicit assumptions. It makes no difference if a false sense of superiority is fostered by ignorance or fed by hate.

“In addition to no longer tolerating intolerance, we also must protect and empower boys and men of color and our entire community. The color of our skin cannot make us an easy target. “We can do better. And, as recent events remind us, we have to do so.”

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