

Letter to the Community

June 12, 2020

Like many people around the world, we are shocked and horrified by the senseless death of George Floyd while in police custody. We join in mourning and send our deep and heartfelt condolences to those who are left to mourn his loss for a lifetime. This tragedy has brought to the surface systemic inequalities existing in our society, specifically among people of color, from which we cannot walk away. To be comfortably numb to these issues is completely unacceptable. Now is the time for us to unite and work together to create a more equitable and just community. We all bear this responsibility.

We know we are not immune to inequality, racial or otherwise, in Thurston County. If any good will come out of this moment, it is an opportunity for us to reflect on our ideals as a people, listen to one another, and forge a new path forward for ourselves and future generations.

As your Board of County Commissioners, we commit to working with our employees and other elected leaders to develop local policies building up support systems to foster understanding and inclusion. Over the coming months, we will explore how we, as a legislative body, can institutionalize equality across our county government. Some concepts we are exploring include:

- Conducting a comprehensive re-assessment of our organizational mindset, policies, and procedures.
- Re-establishing a council on equality and human rights comprised of a cross section of individuals from diverse backgrounds in our community.
- Supporting increased training opportunities for our law enforcement personnel.

We expect so much from our law enforcement. We ask them to be mental health experts, substance abuse experts, and a myriad of other professions - all while continuing to protect and serve our community. They also need our support.

Together, we can rise to this moment. The improvements we make will be felt throughout our community. There are policy changes we will advocate for at the state and federal level. We are committed to the vision of a Thurston County ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of everyone.

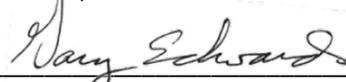
Sincerely,



John Hutchings, Chair



Tye Menser, Vice-Chair



Gary Edwards, Commissioner