



STATE OF MAINE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Statement of Maine Supreme Judicial Court

The horrific deaths of African-Americans in Minneapolis, Louisville, and Atlanta in recent weeks have driven home a stark and heartbreaking reminder to all Americans that racism continues to be a pervasive blight upon our constitutional republic and the world at large. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated:

Racism and racial discrimination attack the core of a person's dignity, for they seek to divide the human family, to which all people and individuals belong, into categories, some of which are considered more worthy than others. History has proved time and again that, when allowed to take root, discrimination, racism and intolerance shatter the very foundations of societies and damage them for generations.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *United against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance*, Foreword (2012).

https://www.un.org/en/letsfightracism/pdfs/United%20against%20Racism_English_web.pdf

The courts have a direct and fundamental responsibility to dispense justice without any hint or even appearance of racism or other bias in all of their insidious forms. Freedom from disparate treatment based upon race is not only a constitutional right—it is a basic human right. The mission of the Maine Judicial Branch is to “administer justice by providing a safe, accessible, efficient

and impartial system of dispute resolution that serves the public interest, protects individual rights, and instills respect for the law.”

Bearing in mind that we must learn in order to lead, we have begun to reach out to people and resources that can help us better understand, identify, and address racism in all its forms and its insidious effects upon attitudes and behavior. In addition to further training for judicial officers and other court staff, we will work toward integrating into our systems additional measures to prevent racism and other forms of discrimination from affecting the justice process, and will seek the advice and support of those in the wider community to help us with that continuing and redoubled effort.

Dated: June 8, 2020

_____/s/_____
ANDREW M. MEAD
Acting Chief Justice, Senior Associate Justice

_____/s/_____
ELLEN A. GORMAN

_____/s/_____
JOSEPH M. JABAR

_____/s/_____
THOMAS E. HUMPHREY

_____/s/_____
ANDREW M. HORTON

_____/s/_____
CATHERINE R. CONNORS
Associate Justices