

Statement on Structural Racism and Inequality in the United States

We join people throughout the nation and the world in condemning the racist violence that has led to the deaths of George Floyd and numerous other members of the Black community in the United States.

As we mourn the loss of these individuals and protest the actions that caused their senseless deaths, we must also squarely face the root cause of this grave and persistent problem: the structural racism and inequality that pervades U.S. society. Racial discrimination and injustice not only lead to loss of life; they also have profound effects on the health and well-being of people of color throughout their lives, as detailed in the Institute of Medicine (now National Academy of Medicine) study, *Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care* (2003). The significant racial health disparities that exist in the United States, seen now in the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Black and Brown communities, provide a poignant example of the continuing challenges that we face, as a country, in ensuring the equality of all of our people.

Addressing the challenges of discrimination and inequality requires action at every level of society. We call upon members of the scientific, engineering, and medical communities to help translate our shared concerns about systemic racism and violence into concrete actions designed to build a more just society. Science, engineering, and medicine enrich human existence in countless ways, from improving public safety to preventing disease, and we must work together to ensure that their benefits are enjoyed by all people. We must, at the same time, work to ensure equity and diversity within our professions. Now is not the time for silence, but words alone are not enough; they must be coupled with action if we are to achieve meaningful, lasting change.

Committee on Human Rights

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