



PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PHONE (727) 464-3360 • FAX (727) 464-3022 • 315 COURT STREET • CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33756
www.pinellascounty.org

PAT GERARD
CHAIR

June 4, 2020

The outrage expressed throughout our nation over the death of George Floyd goes to the heart of the value we all place on human life. We are shocked and distressed at this and other systemic acts of violence against persons because of their race. The death of George Floyd points to stereotypical racism and hatred that continues to be prevalent in America today.

Our Constitutional right to peacefully protest is a fundamental principle of a free nation and should compel a call to action. We have seen our country change for the better when people's voices are heard, and meaningful actions are taken. Although uncomfortable, difficult realities and meaningful progress sometimes is only achieved through this call to action. However, when a small group in a movement resorts to looting, destruction and violence as a means of capturing media attention, once again, this diverts our attention from the issues that we have avoided for too long. Those who choose to ransack local businesses and commit violence against innocent parties must be stopped. Violence and discrimination, both overt and institutional, must stop if we are to achieve our principle of a free and fair society.

We request that our Sheriff and municipal Police Departments conduct a review of their Use of Force Policies and engage in future collaboration on the implementation of improvements and confirmation of best practices. Even though Sheriff Gualtieri, Mayor Kriseman and Mayor Hibbard, and their respective agencies already prohibit the conduct which resulted in Mr. Floyd's death, they still support our request for a policy review.

As the Board of County Commissioners for Pinellas County, we hear this call to action and invite you, the people who elected us, to work with us towards a better Pinellas County for everyone who lives here. It is time for action. We are committed to changing the culture that led to the death of George Floyd. While we work to improve housing and job opportunities, transportation alternatives and blighted neighborhoods, it is imperative we do so with a focus on justice.

We want to build a community that has equality for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pat Gerard".

Pat S. Gerard, Chair
Pinellas County Commission