



June 5, 2020

Dear Community Members,

The EDPP Directors are issuing an open letter in light of recent events surrounding the death of Regis Kochinski-Paquet, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, police brutality, and its root causes—systemic and institutionalized racism.

The current political climate has revealed something important to us all, and that is: **Anti-Black racism is both alive and thriving**. These events do not demonstrate that racism has now gotten worse, but rather, racism is now being filmed. The Black community is hurting, tired, and demanding REAL systemic change, not only in the U.S., but worldwide as Anti-Black racism is a global crisis.

At George Floyd's Memorial Service, Rev. Al Sharpton said:

"George Floyd's story has been the story of Black folks. Because ever since 401 years ago, the reason we could never be who we wanted, and dreamed of being, is because you kept your knee on our neck...It's time to stand up, in George's name and say, get your knee off our necks!"

While EDPP's mandate is to underline the need for intersectionality in public policy and discourse, this simple, common-sense task has translated into a big feat as we consider our current day negligence. Our society is plagued with discrimination, ignorance, prejudice, and Anti-Black racism. The fundamental principles of our Constitution are being eroded every minute a Black life is being discounted, devalued and/or discarded.

EDPP's 2020-2021 strategic plan moving forward will encompass an: Anti-Oppression and Anti-Colonial workshop; Anti-Blackness awareness training; and roundtable discussions surrounding equity, human rights, and inclusion. If you have any more suggestions, please get in touch with one of the Directors.

We acknowledge that this is a very difficult time for many of us. At the same time, **it should not be seen as a choice whether we use our voices to protect Black men, women, children, and non-binary persons—it is our duty and obligation as policy professionals**. Without acknowledging the role we play, and the platform each and every single one of us carry, our community at Munk cannot expect public policy to fix what is broken. We must do better.

We hope you receive our letter well with our best intentions in mind. To be complicit when our Black community is mourning is an exploitation of privilege and the continued extraction of benefits—this is not what EDPP stands for. A gentle but clear reminder, to be pro-Black does not mean that you are anti-everyone else. Thank you.

Yours,

Karishma Firdausi, Manny Gill and Jennifer Oduro.