A Statement from the Executive Director of the Oklahoma City Housing Authority

We must dissent from the indifference. We must dissent from the apathy. We must dissent from the fear, the hatred, and the mistrust. We must dissent from a nation that buried its head in the sand waiting in vain for the needs of its poor, its elderly, and its sick to disappear and just blow away.

(Thurgood Marshall, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1967 - 1991)

Indifference and apathy are two traits that have led our city, state and nation to a point where fear, hatred and mistrust are prevalent. These traits are not new; they have existed since the beginning; describing the painful realism of the racial inequality that is so prevalent.

But now it is time to dissent from these traits, to rip them apart, to stomp them out. We must go forward declaring at the top of our souls that Black Lives Matter!

Why must we say Black Lives Matter? The system we live in today is vastly unequal. So that’s why saying All Lives Matter, when you’re faced with a situation where black people are being disproportionately killed, arrested, profiled and persecuted, is actually contributing to the racism problem.

And we must not wait in vain with our heads stuck in the sand, or office, or boardroom, or comfortable living room.

The Covid-19 Pandemic showed us that we are all vulnerable. We can all experience fear, mistrust, anxiety, confusion, and fatigue. But hopefully someday soon we can be vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus.

We cannot ever be vaccinated against racial injustice. Unless we truly stand up against hate, prejudice and racism we will not be able to provide safer communities, build bridges and establish trust.

We must work to right the deep social and structural inequities. We have a long, long road to travel.

As the Executive Director of the Oklahoma City Housing Authority I am committed to doing better. I do not have the answers. And I ask for your help so together we can work to learn new ways to enrich and empower our staff and those we serve.

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Walton W. Dillett