



Supreme Court of Kentucky

Chambers, State Capitol
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
502-564-4162

John D. Minton, Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky

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Statement on Racial Injustice

Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr.
Remarks Before Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary
June 4, 2020

[B]efore I get to my prepared remarks, the previous speakers' passion and our nation's collective grief compels me to briefly address the racism and injustice that continue to oppress here in the Commonwealth and across the country.

As my colleague in North Carolina, Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, so eloquently stated when addressing this issue in her state, the protests we are witnessing across the country and the world highlight the fact that "racism and prejudice have remained stubbornly fixed and resistant to change."

As a justice system, we must be willing to recognize our failures. And we must be willing to not only listen, but to actually hear the very valid concerns raised by people who have been marginalized, degraded or made to feel less than.

The court system and the legal profession must continue to advocate for a diverse bench and bar to reflect the communities that we serve. We must continue to improve communication between the courts, justice partners and court participants. And we must constantly evaluate and address institutional racism and our own implicit biases.

I recognize that we – all of us – have a long way to go. But I am pleased with the progress the court system has made over the past few years to provide diversity and cultural collision trainings to all judges, clerks, specialty courts staff and pretrial staff across the state.

The Administrative Office of the Courts has also established the Statewide Department Equity Committee, whose focus is reducing racial and ethnic disparities within the court system. The committee meets quarterly to analyze data, determine areas of racial disparity, and discuss current strategies each department is implementing and areas of improvement.

These strategies have had the most impact in our Family & Juvenile Services Department, where these policies and practices have directly impacted the individualized client approach that our Court Designated Worker staff provide to the youth they work with daily.

I want to assure the members of this committee – and everyone listening today – that the Kentucky Court of Justice is committed to hearing your cries for justice and working to eradicate the racial and ethnic disparities within our system. I pledge to you that we will do better.

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