



June 3, 2020

Supervisor Juli E. Briskman Condemns Systemic Racism and Police Brutality

Calls for Racial Equity Lens in Conducting All County Business

It was about one week ago today that images of George Floyd's murder at the hands of a group of Minneapolis police officers began flooding our screens and national consciousness with yet another senseless act of police brutality against an unarmed African American man.

Personally, I was still digesting the horror of watching another broad-daylight lynching of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed black man who was mowed down with a shotgun while jogging in a neighborhood in Glynn County, Georgia.

I have been struggling with how I can express meaningful empathy as a white woman and affect change as a newly elected Supervisor. My horror and sadness over these acts are nothing compared to the suffering of my black brothers and sisters who struggle to succeed in an ever-changing system built to oppress them; from employment opportunities, to healthcare, to our education system, to our financial structures and especially our law enforcement.

As I was preparing to attend the #ICantBreathe rally in Leesburg on Sunday, I told my colleagues I had no idea what to write on my sign as a white woman and they responded: "Three words on your sign, Juli. 'I'm an ally.'" And that is what I did.

What I failed to do, however, was make an official public statement condemning police brutality and racism at all levels and in all forms. And for my tardiness in doing this, I sincerely apologize to our African American community.

I unequivocally condemn the acts of the Minneapolis police officers who murdered George Floyd in broad daylight on a public street while ignoring the pleas of bystanders and I believe all four should be arrested and charged with murder. I denounce all acts of police brutality rooted in racism.

Last night, I had the opportunity to open our regular Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Business meeting with what is traditionally a prayer or words of inspiration. A link to a clip of those comments is below. Here is a segment of what I said:



Loudoun County

VIRGINIA

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“I pray and plead with my colleagues, that we on the board will be allies for our neighbors of color. That we understand that silence is complicity. I pray that we ensure every policy we consider, every zoning application we review, every meeting we take, every vote we take, and every dollar we budget is seen through a lens of racial equity and justice so that the people of color in our county don’t just ‘matter.’ That they are lifted up and that they thrive.”

In my board comments, I also addressed the myriad of emails we have received about accountability of law enforcement in Loudoun County. A link to my full board comments is below. Here is an excerpt from my statement:

“This week our board has received many emails asking about body cameras for deputies and other accountability measures for our Sheriff’s Department. As they understandably believe it is incumbent on us as a governing body to make sure our law enforcement is accountable. To those who don’t understand our governmental system in Loudoun County as of yet, the Sheriff is an elected official. As a board, we have no jurisdiction over law enforcement in our community. We do not have any authority to ask for records, or review processes such as hiring and firing, or to even suggest training modules. In my opinion, this is a questionable set up, especially for a county of our size. And we need to start thinking about a solution. Another positive step will be removing the highly offensive statue in the front of our courthouse. We should also be listening to the LCPS Minority Student Advisory Committee who said in our joint committee meeting just yesterday that the 2019 LCPS Equity Assessment was not even mentioned in our report on Loudoun Youth recently.”

Allyship is a lifelong process of building relationships on trust, consistency and accountability with marginalized individuals or groups. As a start, I pledge allyship to our communities of color and I look forward to doing everything I can as a County Supervisor to be the change and to affect the change that will help our community, state and nation heal and move forward to a new era of justice and peace.

[Click here](#) view the full clip of the opening message at the June 2, 2020 Board meeting.

[Click here](#) to view the full clip of my board comments.