



City of Seattle

Seattle Disability Commission

Dear Community Members, Seattle City Council, and the Mayor's Office,

The past few months have been one of the most difficult periods in most of our lives. George Floyd, Monika Diamond, and Breonna Taylor were human beings before they became hashtags. Like the deaths of Nina Pop, Eric Garner, and Charleena Lyles before them, their forced transition to ancestors and loss will affect our lives in ways we have yet to fully grasp.

We can't breathe.

For Black and indigenous people, however, hardships, challenges, and disparities have been much more than hot button recent issues. At the intersection of antiblackness and ableism, in our work as advocates and activists, we often come face to face with the reality of these disparities, irrespective of respectability or diplomacy on a daily basis.

We can't breathe.

Systemic racism and inequity are issues which should be discussed and addressed with corresponding actions on a three hundred sixty-five days a year, seven days a week basis. The need to take concrete actions in ensuring we are removing barriers is critical to our survival as a neighbors, community, and country. This includes following the calls of protestors, legislators, and community leaders to hold our city leaders accountable for violence. This means defunding and demilitarizing police and redistribute those resources and power to Black communities and their intersectional space who have the most clear and nuanced understanding of the issue.

We can't breathe.

Through all of this we are heartened by what we have seen from people of all ages, abilities, races, gender identities and cultures coming together and listening to the experiences and trauma of Black people to build policies to go forward. Examining and removing our own implicit bias and adopting a spirit of disability justice and transformative practice continues to be a lifelong goal in our work. As the Disability Commission, we have an obligation to follow suit and work proactively towards dismantling antiblackness and racialized ableism in this moment and for the rest of our existence in society.

We can't breathe.

The Seattle Disability Commission¹ stands against institutional racism, ableism, antiblackness and its intersectional violence and oppression. We unite against the systems which strive to

¹ The Commission for People with disAbilities has proposed a name change to the Seattle Disability Commission.



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continue racism while we build policies supporting diverse communities which celebrate equity so that we all can breathe.

We can breathe.

Exhaling,

ChrisTiana ObeySumner, Co-Chair | Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities

Eric Scheir, Co-Chair | Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities

**Statement inspired by template from original author Tricia Diamond*