

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES



Dear [REDACTED],

The news about the protests and civil unrest over the past week has been triggered by anger and frustration over the killing of George Floyd. But his death, along with those of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, lay bare the impact of generations of injustice people of color have endured, issues our region has long confronted.

As a native Washingtonian, I witnessed the pain and outrage following the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. Over the last week, it's been hard to see similar pain, anger, and desperation around how little has changed in the past 50 years. However difficult this time may be, this is not a passing news story. Our community—our nation—is engaged in a conversation that has been building for generations. Compounded with the public health and economic crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all under unprecedented pressure and strain.

I am mindful of the great responsibility the news media play in covering these events. The recent acts of violence against people of color and subsequent cries for racial justice are consuming our personal lives, our journalism, and our work throughout the station. Every member of the WAMU and DCist staff takes seriously the responsibility to tell each story with empathy and accuracy. We know that's what you expect of us.

Despite the daunting nature of this challenge, I see an opportunity to facilitate real and lasting dialogue, and to amplify the voices of under-served communities—particularly communities of color —protesting systemic racism, violence, and economic injustice. **Connecting communities across our region to each other is our mission, and one of the founding principles of public radio.** Our duty is to reflect the unique experiences of the communities we serve, a goal that has never been more important.

We at WAMU and DCist are committed to providing you with honest, clear, and accurate information. Our commitment to **in-depth coverage** is critical to meeting our responsibility to get these evolving and complex stories right. At the same time, *I invite you to take part in and **help shape this difficult conversation** as we all work to make things better, while we continue to **foster discussion on solutions to the systematic disparities** that have long plagued our community.*

The Washington region is not just a place we cover. It is our home. I, and many of our staff have deep roots in this community. For us this crisis is not just an important story, it's personal. Just as it is for you.

Throughout this crisis and beyond, we at WAMU and DCist are committed to bringing you a deeper understanding of the issues facing our region. And to listening, as we all work to find solutions and facilitate dialogue with empathy and sensitivity to help our community emerge stronger from these difficult times. Please join with us.

With hope for the future,

JJ Yore
WAMU General Manager

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