



January 19, 2021

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE RESIDENTS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY REGARDING RACIST REMARKS BY CLACKAMAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER MARK SHULL

In February of last year, the Washington County Board of Commissioners adopted an historic [Equity Resolution](#), in which we unanimously pledged to identify and dismantle “long-standing systems, programs, policies and practices that may have historically created obstacles to the success of people of color, members of ethnic communities and any marginalized group.” While we are making steady progress to fully implement a variety of strategies that foster a culture of equity and inclusion for all County residents and staff, we acknowledge that there is much work to do and that relationships based on mutual respect and trust are at the heart of our efforts.

By contrast, the racist, extremist and inflammatory views of Clackamas County Commissioner Mark Shull—targeting immigrants, Muslims, communities of color and other marginalized groups—not only represent an existential threat to the safety of our Muslim neighbors but also serve to sabotage our efforts to establish and maintain trusting relationships with our entire community. Although Mr. Shull is ultimately accountable to the residents of Clackamas County, his divisive rhetoric has had a triggering and traumatizing effect on many of our constituents in Washington County, as well as residents across the entire metropolitan area.

Despite Mr. Shull’s most recent remarks related to “increasing understanding and cooperation” among all groups, his previous expressions of racist bigotry and Islamophobia are completely incompatible with public service and have betrayed public trust. His stated views render him ineffective as a partner in advancing important regional initiatives. Simply put, we refuse to work with any individual or group that espouses hateful, dehumanizing and xenophobic beliefs.

In light of our solemn commitment to uphold the Washington County Equity Resolution and in solidarity with our diverse community, we emphatically support the recent action of the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners to censure Mr. Shull and we echo their call for his immediate resignation.

Finally, we encourage Mr. Shull to seek out opportunities to engage with members of the Muslim and immigrant communities. We are hopeful that by doing so, he can gain understanding and empathy for those he has harmed and ultimately help to bring about healing and reconciliation.

Kathryn Harrington, Chair At-Large

Pam Treece, Commissioner District 2

Jerry Willey, Commissioner District 4

Nafisa Fai, Commissioner District 1