



Standing Together

We as Americans and New Yorkers are currently experiencing a great sense of loss, fear and pain. But we know that for too many members of our community, these feelings are not new. Systemic racism against Black people has pervaded our country for over four hundred years. They have long been targets of discrimination, where they are fearful for their lives, simply because of the color of their skin.

With the collective voice of our organization and the CPA profession, with reach across the state of New York and beyond, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to make a difference. The NYSSCPA has long provided education to members on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and, in recent years, we have prioritized this work. I have signed the CEO For Action & Diversity Plan, and I see great progress coming from our Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the committee's programming, including its annual conference. For over thirty years, in our effort to introduce the CPA profession to students of color, we have provided them with scholarships and summer programs, and our new NYSSCPA Strategic Plan explicitly outlines a requirement for diversity on the NYSSCPA Board of Directors, Chapter Boards, technical committees, and so much more.

However, I know we have much more work to do and this is when I call on you, our members, to be the voice of change in your communities. It is incumbent upon all of us to be allies and speak and work against injustice. We must identify and combat unconscious bias; we must have courageous conversations and we must look within ourselves to confront any misconceptions we hold. We must keep learning and we must create space for everyone at the table.

Many of you are taking action against racial injustice and I commend you. If you are searching for ways to take action, here's how you can begin.

- Reach out. Create space for people of color and other underrepresented groups to share their experiences if they choose.
- Listen. Engage in open and honest dialogue about racial injustice and bias.

- Educate. Seek to understand how power and privilege have created systemic disparities and injustices within our nation.

- Act. Take a stand against injustice and hatred by signing a petition or volunteering for and donating to organizations doing important work to end racism, bigotry and injustice.

We, in New York, have always been viewed as leaders. Now is the time for us to push boldly into a future that confronts social injustice within our own CPA community and through the broader audiences we reach and influence as business leaders. Let's amplify the courageous conversations and make sure our Society and the profession are a welcome home for all.

Joanne S. Barry, CAE
NYSSCPA
Executive Director/CEO