

When I became the Mayor of Charleston—a diverse and rich community that I love and that is proud to be the home of Eastern Illinois University—I took an oath to defend the Constitution, and that includes the rights of each and every citizen. I would be remiss if, as your Mayor, I did not acknowledge the tragedy that occurred with George Floyd and acknowledge the painful experiences of the African Americans in this community, in our State, and in our Country. It is only through solidarity and a shared commitment to justice that we will be able to live up to Charleston's values, increase our prosperity, and create a society where we can all thrive. Speaking for myself, the City Council and City Staff, we all know we need to listen to what our African American residents and students have to say. We are ready to listen. But we also know that we need to call out hatred and injustice when it occurs. It has come to my attention that over the last week there has been some hateful commentary online. Any hate speech that makes its way to my public page will of course be taken down immediately; but let me be clear: I reject it. It is not worthy of public consideration. It is not worthy of debate. It is contemptible and I will not tolerate it. Instead, I call upon all of us to put our best efforts and energy into moving forward together to be the Charleston we want for all of our residents and students. We are committed to a standard that makes all of our citizens feel safe and valued, regardless of their skin color. Positive change starts at home, with you and I. I urge you to move forward with Love, compassion, and empathy, united together seeking to make the world around you better. Each and every one of us plays a vital role in continuing to make our community exceptional.

Respectfully,



Dr. Brandon T. Combs
Mayor of Charleston