

**Deputy Council President Juan Carlos González**

May 31, 2020

By now, there isn't much I can write or say that hasn't already been written or said. I have struggled to string together coherent thoughts on the despair I, and so many of us, carry following the death of George Floyd.

I watched the footage of George Floyd's killing. For 9 minutes a police officer knelt on his neck. All George could do was plead for air and ask for his mother. Slowly, he died a painful death at the hands of law enforcement in Minneapolis. It sends chills down my spine that people watched and filmed, and felt powerless to intervene to save George's life. It's a brutal reminder of the power dynamics community face when holding police accountable.

I also watched a video earlier this week, of a liberal white woman in Central Park in New York walking her dog unleashed, weaponizing her privilege and calling the cops on a black man bird watching as he asked her to leash her dog.

The protests we see on television, on our Twitter and Facebook feeds, are asking us to acknowledge the underlying current of White Supremacy that divides our nation. The protest want us to acknowledge that White Supremacy has asked us to normalize the killing, beating and incarceration of black and brown men and women. We are being asked to acknowledge that racism is pervasive in our lives today. We are being asked to see that racism is a destructive force implicitly and explicitly used by people in power to maintain the status quo.

We are being asked not only to listen, but to actively dismantle the institutions we've inherited and rebuild them with racial justice at the center.

Black Lives Matter. I recognize how important it is to say Black Lives Matter as a Latino and an elected official. Anti-Blackness is a deeply-seated issue that the Latinx community must address. To be silent now, is to be complicit with the racist policies that hold black and brown people down. The racism that killed George Floyd, Ahmaud Aubrey, Eric Garner, Quance Hayes, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, and countless others, is the same racism that put Latino immigrants in cages. If we cannot stand together in the face of injustice, we cannot ask this country to move forward. To those in my Latino community, please reflect on how we can step up to tackle racial injustice not only when it impacts our community.

I know I will reflect, and continue to reflect on what I can do in my role as Metro Deputy Council President to make this region what it should be for all black, brown and white people that love to call Oregon home.

In solidarity,  
Juan Carlos González