

I am horrified but not surprised by what has taken place today, as I have sat in community forums and led classroom conversations like this for many years.

It is pervasive. It is profound. It is pathological. **The IT is white supremacy.**

The façade, veil, and artillery of white innocence must be dismantled. And that has been duly revealed today. **Supervisors—this movement is MOVING.** *With or without you.*

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice is an act of love. It is also an acknowledgement of harm, violence, and intent toward redress and an echo of California's Reparations Task Force recent declaration that our state owes an apology to African Americans for "*enshrined white supremacy.*"

Contra Costa County is unique but it is not exceptional. The problems it faces are common across numerous metropolitan regions throughout the country, and I need not enumerate them here. Municipalities are confronting historical injustice and systemic racism with declarations of integrity and facing forward to build a more inclusive and equitable future. They are pioneering new solutions that reimagine how government works and who it works for, and they are doing so through redirecting funds, resituating critical decision-making power into the hands of marginalized and historically/intentionally under-resourced community members, and enacting systems change to address systems harms. Our county need not reinvent the wheel—there are plentiful models to guide this work, and our elected officials and county staff should be humble enough to seek inspiration and counsel from them. And—most crucially—from community.

Community is as much about struggle as it is about consensus. In fact, struggle and conflict is what yields consensus that feels mutually achieved and not unilaterally imposed. I applaud the intentional process of centering community engagement and input ahead of the Office's installation. This report, the people who have shown up today to provide comment—this is the voice of **righteous struggle.**

To that end, I especially want to lift up the Core Committee's recommendation to create a Lived Experience Community Advisory Board, which will serve as a key pivot in centering community direction and oversight. It is vital that community members—particularly those impacted by system harms and varied forms of marginalization—**anchor, author, and authorize the work of this Office.** This Board will be the linchpin to empower residents to drive change in internal county culture.

Building and sustaining blessed community is sacred and soulful work. It is strategic and stepwise. The core committee has shepherded this process alongside community with care and conviction. It is time for more hands and hearts to carry the work forward.

The Core Committee has worked diligently at the pace of trust. Do not let that trust be jeopardized; do not let all the work put in on the front end be for naught. If Justice is what love

looks like in public—esteemed supervisors, please love your community by uplifting justice and equity today. Forward together. Love on the frontlines. I urge all of the Supervisors to heed the recommendations laid out in this report and to enact them with intention and accountability. Thank you.