



M A R I N C O U N T Y
SUPERVISOR
KATE SEARS

Update from Kate – Lives That Matter

My Statement at the Marin County Board of Supervisors Meeting Tuesday, July 12, 2016

Recent events suggest that we live in a world and in a society that has seriously lost its way.

Terrorist attacks in Paris, Turkey, Brussels, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and mass shootings in Orlando, FL, and San Bernadino, CA, have grabbed our attention and battered our hearts.

Since the 2014 killing of Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, in an encounter with a white officer in Ferguson, Missouri, there has been a stream of tragic encounters between police officers and African-Americans.

And in a spasm of violence last week, Alton Sterling was killed by police officers in Baton Rouge, LA; Philando Castile was shot by a police officer in a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota; and 5 police officers were killed and 7 wounded by a shooter in Dallas, TX.

What are we to do in a country where a traffic stop has become a Rorschach test for how differently we experience and perceive the world, and police officers are killed while walking with peaceful protesters to keep them safe.

After these terrible events of violence, we grieve together and we look for causes: mental health issues, international or individual fanaticism, too many guns, too much social alienation, and too little trust. We hope that a national leader can, through oratory, bring us all together.

But really, in a society rent by partisanship and a political culture that promotes divisiveness and polarization, the challenge of truly coming together and finding solutions can seem overwhelming.

Calls for unity are important but perhaps more realistically let's acknowledge the divide between us and work to cross it.

That requires coming together, and working together, to recognize and acknowledge our divisions, to acknowledge and understand our different life experiences, and to not only believe but also act in ways that show that all of our lives matter.

We must shine a light on the unrecognized biases, blind spots and assumptions that infuse our actions, and find ways to link hands and hearts across what divides us.

And so I call on us now to do two things:

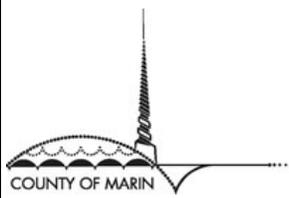
First, to come together as a Marin community – the interfaith community, county and local law enforcement, elected officials, community leaders and activists from across our county – from Marin City, to the Canal, to Novato and everywhere in between – to send the message that all lives matter, “Black Lives” and “Blue Lives”; that everyone should feel respected and safe; that racial bias has no place in law enforcement or in any other aspect of life in our County; and that violence is never the answer.

Second, I urge us as the County of Marin to push forward the good work so many of our Departments and employees are doing on equity. We all must have the hard conversations about our own unrecognized biases, blind spots and assumptions if we are truly to join hands and fix what is broken in our society.

And finally, I urge all of us to choose not to listen to the voices that seek to inflame, to prey on anger and fear and deepen our estrangement. Let us choose instead to be openhearted, to forego the urge to demonize others, and find the empathy and the interest to learn from another’s experience.

This is work for all of us to do together, for only together can we make certain that all lives matter.





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