

Pilon, Janet

Subject: CALL FOR ACTION: From, a concerned resident

From: Jessika Taveras

Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 12:42 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: CALL FOR ACTION: From, a concerned resident

To Mayor Eisenberger and members of Council,

I am writing to you today as a resident of Ancaster, Ontario. My name is Jessika Taveras and I am a certified Ontario teacher. I am a 28 year old white woman raising a child of colour in our city. With the current climate of the world, to say that I am horrified is a gross understatement. And what concerns me the most is that these atrocious injustices, which have been occurring for centuries, are just now beginning to be seen and heard from individuals of privilege. But I am glad that we have at least reached this point.

I have read your statement regarding the murder of George Floyd and I thank you for using your platform and your voice.

I believe the word you meant to say is 'systemic racism', meaning that the entire system has been set up to perpetuate and preserve the oppression of people of colour. This exists in Hamilton today; in our education system, in our policing, in our social services... in all aspects of our community. In 2019, it was reported that Hamilton had the highest rate of hate crimes in Canada. I am horrified to think of my 2 year old son growing up in a city where he will be racially discriminated against, looked at as the "other" or racially profiled by police.

The only way this is ever going to change is by every person of white privilege rewiring the historic and present day oppressive ideologies that exist within themselves. And then putting that change into action. People merely not wanting or not welcoming racism in Hamilton is NOT enough. We must begin to take anti-racist action to create actual permanent systemic change. For us white people, doing the work to learn, change and have these conversations might be uncomfortable. But discomfort is not the same as fearing for your life, which many people in the black community face everyday when having an interaction with a police officer. We

cannot turn a blind eye to this any longer. And as a concerned resident, I will not settle for people in power talking about it for a week, putting out a statement and then no change ever occurring.

So with this being said, I would like to ask what your plans of action to create actual systemic change are?

I look forward to hearing more.

Sincerely,

Jessika Taveras