June 4, 2020

JOINT STATEMENT BY LOCAL VOLUNTARY BAR ASSOCIATIONS REGARDING RECENT EVENTS

We, the Officers and Directors of the Hillsborough County Bar Association, the George Edgecomb Bar Association, the Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers, the Tampa Hispanic Bar Association, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Tampa Bay, the Florida Muslim Bar Association, the North Tampa Bar Association, and the Florida Association of LGBT Lawyers & Allies, Inc. express our collective concern regarding the recent events in Minneapolis, Tampa, and other communities, stemming in part from the historical issues of racial injustice and inequality in our nation. We likewise express our collective resolve and commitment to promote equal justice under the law for all citizens, as espoused in the United States and Florida Constitutions.

We recognize the difficult tasks of law enforcement officials and officers, and we salute the great majority who serve bravely with integrity and fairness. But we recognize that the duties to serve and protect are not always applied equally, and particularly to the Black community and other people of color. We support the opportunity and freedom of individuals to assemble peaceably and to petition the government for redress of grievances. Nevertheless, we implore our communities to do so peacefully, without violence, in pursuit of the common objective of “liberty and justice for all.”

It remains our hope that through thoughtful and peaceful protests, committed leadership, and necessary reforms, we can begin to heal the hurt in our hearts, our families, and our communities. We issue this statement with renewed resolve to continue efforts to engage in dialogue, to promote fairness and equity, and move onward together, united, in peace, understanding and care for each other.

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