

A Message from the CEO on the Death of Tyre Nichols

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Dear ACAA team members,

Today marks the beginning of Black History Month, a time when we pay tribute to the triumphs and accomplishments of African Americans throughout history. We have much to recognize and much to celebrate; and we will. But these celebrations would lack meaning without first acknowledging the pain of the current moment.

Last week the world witnessed news reports showing yet another murder — in a long line of similar events — of an unarmed Black American. I was horrified upon learning details of the attack on 29-year-old Tyre Nichols, and was even more outraged at the video footage released last weekend. The weight of this tragedy is inescapable for all of us, of every skin color. But the murder of Tyre Nichols especially impacts our Black colleagues, as it underscores the trauma and the very real fears they grapple with daily.

Knowing this team as I do, I suspect you're asking what can we do in response. It can be overwhelming to know how to change something so huge and pervasive, but I think we begin with looking at what is in our immediate control. For me, as your CEO, that means recommitting to ensuring that team members of every color know they are safe and respected in the workplace. I hold myself and our senior leadership accountable for weeding out the roots of bias anywhere it might threaten to present itself in the work we do.

We each also have a personal responsibility to educate ourselves on how bias might present in subtle ways and impact our colleagues. One way to do this is through the "Fighting Unconscious Bias in the Workplace" training — one of the many courses on bias available through our learning management platform.

Lastly, I would like to ask you to look out for one another: check in on a colleague who might be feeling the pain of this moment most acutely and make sure they know of the resources available to them to deal with the difficulty of this time. That goes for self-care, too. Tap into your personal support networks, call the EAP for confidential support at 1-800-XXX-XXXX, or contact the national Mental Health Hotline at 988.

We are stronger together, and when crises hit, we must work to support each other through the difficult times. In the month ahead we'll celebrate the historic contributions that Black men and women have made to our region and our industry. In the meantime, I know you'll join me in committing to working toward a future that forever removes bias, mistreatment, brutality and fear from Black — and all — communities in this nation