Our Response to Racial Injustice

We are experiencing a critical moment in our nation's history following the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. These and other recent troubling events underscore a long history of violence against the Black community despite the great strides our nation has made to advance justice and equality.

At Banner Witcoff, we recognize the gravity of this moment and reiterate our unwavering rejection of racism, bigotry and discrimination in any form. This moment demands that we share a message of solidarity with our Black colleagues and members of the Black community. This moment also demands that we all do more.

To start, we'd like to reaffirm Banner's dedication to our core values and founding principles—a steadfast commitment to advancing diversity, equality and inclusion. Recognizing that words alone are not enough, we commit to taking action. Our Diversity & Inclusion Committee has engaged in initial conversations about our plan moving forward, and below are just a few of the actions we will take in the coming weeks and months:

- **Educate.** Our Diversity & Inclusion Committee will work with Banner Witcoff's Board of Directors to educate our employees on Black history and racism. We closed our offices on June 19 in recognition of Juneteenth and provided educational resources to our employees on the significance of this day that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States.

  We also will work to convene programming throughout the year to discuss these important issues. We expect these conversations to be uncomfortable, and welcome it. We do this with the intention of gaining trust, building bonds, and lifting each other up. We also do this with the intention that everyone can learn how to contribute to change, listen and learn.

- **Donate and Volunteer.** We will make an immediate contribution of $25,000 to the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). This Alabama-based human-rights organization was founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, a prominent civil rights attorney. EJI focuses its efforts on eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and mentally ill, and educating the public on topics of racial injustice and equality.

Beyond our donation to EJI, we will continue to look for opportunities to donate to and volunteer with organizations dedicated to fighting for racial equality and justice. This will include exploring volunteer and pro bono opportunities in the communities where we have offices.

- **Listen**. We will work to create a safe space for our employees to share their experiences and honest feedback about what we, as an employer, can do better. We will survey employees to help us learn how we can improve and how we can open the dialogue to ensure employees at all levels of our firm have a platform to express themselves.

This is our initial plan for action. We expect and hope that it will evolve over time as we continue to listen, learn and seek out additional opportunities for meaningful ways to contribute as individuals and a law firm. We will share our progress and plans along the way.

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