

FIELD REPORT : Q3 2020

# OHIO BUSINESS LEADERS: WE CAN'T COMPETE IF WE CAN'T GET ALONG

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 **BUSINESSFORWARD**  
FOUNDATION

# INTRODUCTION



In today's economy, communities compete with one another to attract new talent and investment. They compete with their schools, workforce, and infrastructure. They also compete with the strength of their community.

Winning states grow and create new jobs, which pay for better schools, roads, and parks. New investment attracts more new investment, and so on. On the other hand, states that fail to bring in new investment can spiral as their shrinking economy causes young workers to move away.

For years, business leaders in Ohio have shared a simple, powerful point with their employees, suppliers, customers, and neighbors: We cannot compete if we cannot get along. We need to work together, respect one another, protect one another, and bring out the best in one another.

The 2020 election will be among the most contentious in recent history. It's okay for citizens of good faith to disagree strongly, but we must commit ourselves to protecting the most vulnerable among us -- and we must reject those trying to divide us.

This report features comments, recommendations, and advice on diversity, inclusion, and tolerance from many of Ohio's most successful business leaders, as well as the CEOs of Fortune 500 companies operating here. Some relate to recent events, like the murder of George Floyd. Others relate to the Columbus City Council's resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. And some relate directly to comments made by President Trump.

If you are interested in learning more, Business Forward is working with community organizations and faith leaders to share ways to manage the discord online, in the news, and on our streets. We encourage you to learn about our program, contribute your own ideas, and participate in one of our trainings.

If we work together, Ohio can compete with anybody.

# OHIO BUSINESSES CONDEMN HATE & VIOLENCE...

“ Across many U.S. communities, horrifying incidents, such as in Minneapolis, remind us of the ugliness of racism that continues to infect our world and plague our society. During this time of social unrest and a global pandemic, the complexities of the emotions around us and in us need a true north. That true north is our values. The words **INCLUSION MAKES US STRONGER...** are more meaningful now than ever. ”

- ANDREW MESLOW  
CEO, L BRANDS  
COLUMBUS, OH<sup>1</sup>

Lbrands

“ What is going on in our nation is heartbreaking. The deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor illustrate with painful clarity the need for fundamental change. This senseless loss of life must stop. As a country, we can and should do better to ensure that all Americans are treated equally and fairly. ”

- JEFF GENNETTE  
CHAIRMAN & CEO, MACY'S INC.  
CINCINNATI, OH<sup>2</sup>

★macy's

“ Our commitment to help and support now is critical, as so many of our associates, families, friends, customers and communities are hurting, frustrated and angry. The senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many more — too many more — across our country have shaken us to our core. We share in feelings of sadness, fear and outrage. We must use our voice to express that we are against racism and injustice against the black community. We can and we must do better as a company and community to become a greater part of the solution. ”

- RODNEY MCMULLEN  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO, KROGER  
CINCINNATI, OH<sup>3</sup>

Kroger

“ We unequivocally denounce racism, intolerance, bias, violence and injustice here and elsewhere...racist rhetoric and xenophobia throughout this crisis have created an even greater divide in our country. ”

- MARK AND RICHARD SMUCKER  
CEO AND CHAIRMAN, SMUCKER'S  
ORRVILLE, OH<sup>4</sup>

SMUCKER'S  
THE J. M. SMUCKER COMPANY

“ We condemn the recent tragedies in the U.S. which illustrate the terrible consequences of racism, discrimination and injustice. We believe the most impactful actions we can take at this time are to continue building on our strong culture of conscious inclusion through our ongoing commitment to attract, develop and engage our diverse workforce. ”

- SHERWIN-WILLIAMS  
CLEVELAND, OH<sup>5</sup>

SHERWIN  
WILLIAMS.

# OHIO BUSINESSES CONDEMN HATE & VIOLENCE...

“

One of our core values at Big Lots is that we treat all like friends, and we bring an attitude of respect and honesty to every interaction. Together, we all stand against the racism and discrimination that so disproportionately impacts the black community.

”

- BIG LOTS  
COLUMBUS, OH<sup>6</sup>



“

Far too often, the burden of seeking equality rests on the shoulders of those most marginalized. This simply won't work. The change we need is broad and deep and requires us all to be active.

”

- DAVID TAYLOR  
CEO, P&G  
CINCINNATI, OH<sup>8</sup>



“

George Floyd's death should never have happened. Inhumanity against one is inhumanity against all. This has to stop. All of us have a responsibility to encourage unity and demand justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and too many others whose lives have been cut short by racism throughout our country's history. We must come together so that everyone enjoys the same privilege of living, working and raising their families in a community that is safe for all.

”

- CARDINAL HEALTH  
DUBLIN, OH<sup>10</sup>



“

[We] stand firmly against racism, intolerance and hate of any kind. Commemorating the ending of slavery in the U.S. is one way we're encouraging learning and empathetic dialogue among our employees, as we work together to identify meaningful ways we can make progress.

”

- MARATHON PETROLEUM  
FINDLAY, OH<sup>7</sup>



“

The recent unjust deaths, protests and civil unrest are a heartbreaking and sobering reminder that racial divide continues in our country. It underscores the importance of why AEP is committed to diversity and inclusion. Everyone should feel welcomed, valued, and treated with dignity and respect. Not just at our company, but everywhere.

”

- AMERICAN ELECTRIC POWER  
COLUMBUS, OH<sup>9</sup>



“

We must forever stamp out racism and discrimination.

”

- KIRT A. WALKER  
CEO, NATIONWIDE  
COLUMBUS, OH<sup>11</sup>



# OHIO BUSINESSES CONDEMN HATE & VIOLENCE

“

Our dedication to a better environment is a dedication to a better environment for everyone. As environmental activists, we recognize that environmental and climate justice can not come without social justice. We cannot solve the climate crisis without first addressing inequality.

”

- PLAINE PRODUCTS  
TERRACE PARK, OH<sup>12</sup>

“

We stand with all those in peaceful protest, seeking to create change, and working hard to end racial inequalities for everyone. In these pivotal moments, it shines a light on the progress that still needs to be made and the importance of everyone – individuals, families, and organizations – to unite under a common cause, to act, and end systemic racism.

”

- JARRED AND BRANDON SMITH  
CO-FOUNDERS, NOOMA  
CLEVELAND, OH<sup>13</sup>

“

OverDrive stands in solidarity with the African American community in the United States... We believe that Black Lives Matter. Now is the time for all to listen, learn, reflect and act. As a team, we're committed to informing and educating ourselves so we can continue to be part of this conversation. We encourage our partners and readers of all ages to join us.

”

- OVERDRIVE  
CLEVELAND, OH<sup>14</sup>

# AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

“At KeyBank, we value diversity and foster inclusion throughout our business, from the employees we hire and the customers we serve, to the suppliers we use and the communities that welcome us. Every employee is engaged with and committed to our goals... We develop our workforce and grow talent to reflect the diversity of our clients and the communities we serve and live in.”

- KEYBANK: CLEVELAND, OH<sup>15</sup>

“By embracing inclusion and diversity, we create an environment that inspires the best from everyone and maximizes the value of our most important asset – Dana people.”

- DANA INC: MAUMEE, OH<sup>16</sup>

“Diversity, equity and inclusion are fundamental to our core values and to an environment where all people can bring their authentic selves to work and feel safe, welcomed, valued and respected... To serve our 20+ million customers, we must understand them. We seek to be diverse in our demographics, our experiences, and our thinking.”

- PROGRESSIVE CORPORATION: MAYFIELD, OH<sup>17</sup>

## 54 COMPANIES HEADQUARTERED IN OHIO HAVE COMMITTED TO CEO ACTION'S PLEDGE:

“As leaders of some of America’s largest corporations, we manage thousands of employees and play a critical role in ensuring that inclusion is core to our workplace culture and that our businesses are representative of the communities we serve. Moreover, we know that diversity is good for the economy; it improves corporate performance, drives growth and enhances employee engagement.

Simply put, organizations with diverse teams perform better.”<sup>18 19</sup>



# CASE STUDY: COLUMBUS BUSINESS LEADERS SUPPORT DECLARATION OF RACISM AS PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS



This past June, John Lowe, CEO of Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, circulated a letter in support of the Columbus City Council's resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. He originally hoped for 10 signatures - but before sending to the City Council, more than 750 business leaders had signed on.<sup>20</sup>

## EXCERPT FROM THE LETTER:

"We write to unequivocally support the Resolution put forward by Council Member Priscilla Tyson, declaring Racism to be a Public Health Crisis. We support the Resolution because we are profoundly outraged and heartbroken that our fellow citizens continue to see themselves in the anguished face of George Floyd pleading for air under the knee of a white man sworn to protect; hear themselves in the nervous voice of Christian Cooper, a bird-watcher whose skin tone is suddenly used to falsely suggest he is a threat; and, in the experiences of countless more Americans of color, so frequently demeaned, threatened and physically harmed... We hope and believe the Resolution will appropriately bring increased government and private-sector attention to these persistent and systemic issues...

**The undersigned are Democrats and Republicans and Independents from across the political spectrum. We write this letter together because the issue about which we write is not a political one, and we recognize that our country's most basic democratic ideals are threatened when we further head in the wrong direction on issues of basic human rights."**

## "BUSINESSES JOIN COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION"<sup>21</sup>



## AS OF JULY, MORE THAN 3,200 BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS SIGNED THE LETTER, INCLUDING:

- Tanny Crane, CEO, Crane Group
- Lisa Ingram, CEO, White Castle
- Michael Fitzpatrick, President, Elford Development
- Brent Crawford, Owner, Crawford Hoying
- David Harrison, President, Columbus State Community College
- Jack Kessler, Founder, The New Albany Company
- Joseph Nardone, CEO, Columbus Regional Airport Authority
- Robert Schottenstein, CEO, M/I Homes
- Lori Kaiser, CEO, Kaiser Consulting

## PART OF A NATIONAL TREND

“THE COST OF SILENCE:  
WHY MORE CEOS ARE SPEAKING  
OUT IN THE TRUMP ERA”<sup>22</sup>

*The Washington Post*

“A WATERSHED MOMENT  
IN CEO ACTIVISM”<sup>23</sup>

*THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.*

“WHY CEOS CAN’T STAY  
SILENT IN THE WAKE OF EVENTS  
LIKE CHARLOTTESVILLE”<sup>24</sup>

**Harvard Business Review**

“CEOS LONG AVOIDED POLITICS.  
TRUMP IS CHANGING THE CALCULUS”<sup>25</sup>

“Fomenting racial unrest is not in the nation’s  
interest and it’s not in businesses’ interest,”  
[Jeffrey Sonnenfeld] said. “Divide and conquer  
has always been Trump’s strategy, and  
somehow it has worked until now. The way to  
take a bully down is through collective action.”

*The New York Times*

### CEOS ACROSS THE U.S.

# 1000+

## COMPANIES

ACROSS 85 INDUSTRIES  
HAVE COMMITTED TO CEO  
ACTION’S PLEDGE.<sup>26</sup>

### NORTH CAROLINA BATHROOM BILL

# 200+

## COMPANIES

SIGNED ONTO A LETTER URGING THE  
GOVERNOR TO REPEAL THE LAW  
THAT REQUIRED TRANSGENDER  
PEOPLE TO USE BATHROOMS BASED  
ON THEIR BIRTH SEX.<sup>27</sup>

### SEPARATION OF FAMILIES

120 companies opposed the policy  
of separating refugee children  
from parents at the border.

More than 60 CEO members of  
BRT wrote a letter to DHS stating  
the government “must avoid making  
changes [to immigration policies]  
that disrupt the lives of thousands of  
law abiding and skilled employees,  
and that inflict substantial harm  
on U.S. competitiveness.”<sup>28</sup>

### MUSLIM TRAVEL BAN

# 127

## COMPANIES

JOINED LAWSUITS AGAINST  
THE TRAVEL BAN<sup>29</sup>

# CASE STUDY: RESPONSE TO CHARLOTTESVILLE

In the aftermath, more than 30 CEOs from major companies resigned from or voted to disband 2 White House advisory panels.

“ America’s leaders must honor our fundamental values by clearly rejecting expressions of hatred, bigotry, and group supremacy... As CEO of Merck and as a matter of personal conscience, I feel a responsibility to take a stand against intolerance and extremism. ”

- KENNETH FRAZIER  
CEO, MERCK PHARMACEUTICALS<sup>30</sup>



“ I have already made clear my abhorrence at the recent hate-spawned violence in Charlottesville, and earlier today I called on all leaders to condemn the white supremacists and their ilk who marched and committed violence... ”

- BRIAN KRZANICH  
CEO, CDK GLOBAL  
FORMER CEO, INTEL<sup>32</sup>



“ There would be no GE without people of all races, religions, genders, and sexual orientations. GE has no tolerance for hate, bigotry, racism, and the white supremacist extremism that the country witnessed in Charlottesville last weekend. ”

- JEFFREY IMMELT  
FORMER CEO, GE<sup>34</sup>



“ As the events of the last week have unfolded here in the U.S., it is clear that we need to collectively stand together and denounce the politics of hate, intolerance and racism. The values that are the cornerstone of our culture: tolerance, diversity, empathy and trust, must be reaffirmed by our actions every day. ”

- GREY HAYES  
CEO, UNITED TECHNOLOGIES<sup>31</sup>



“ I strongly disagree with President Trump’s reaction to the events that took place in Charlottesville over the past several days. Racism, intolerance and violence are always wrong... There is no room for equivocation here: the evil on display by these perpetrators of hate should be condemned and has no place in a country that draws strength from our diversity and humanity. ”

- JAMIE DIMON  
CEO, JPMORGAN CHASE<sup>33</sup>



“ Racism and murder are unequivocally reprehensible and are not morally equivalent to anything else that happened in Charlottesville... I believe the President should have been -- and still needs to be -- unambiguous on that point. ”

- DENISE MORRISON  
FORMER CEO, CAMPBELL SOUP<sup>35</sup>



## CASE STUDY: BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE



The Business Roundtable (BRT) is a nonpartisan national trade group that generally supports conservative policies. The group recently issued a statement calling for unity and urgent action against inequities. BRT Chairman and Walmart CEO Doug McMillion established a special committee to advance racial equity and justice.



Over the past few days, I have watched with a heavy heart the violence, unrest and national outcry to end race-based injustice. ...Having spoken to many CEOs of America's leading businesses, I know they share my conviction that this is a time to act to address racial inequality... Business Roundtable CEOs do not have all of the answers. But we are committed to doing our part to listen, learn and to use our collective influence and scale to advance racial justice and equal opportunity for all Americans.



- DOUG MCMILLION  
CEO, WALMART<sup>36</sup>



As the employers of more than 15 million individuals of all backgrounds, whose diversity strengthens our institutions, Business Roundtable CEOs are deeply concerned about the racial bias that continues to plague our society. At a time of great uncertainty, when communities of color are facing deep inequities, now is a time for unity and justice. We call on national, local and civic leaders to take urgent, thoughtful action to prevent future tragedies and to help our communities heal.



BR Business Roundtable<sup>37</sup>

# CASE STUDY: WITH “TIME TO VOTE,” BUSINESSES PROTECT DEMOCRACY

## Time To Vote

“Time To Vote is a nonpartisan movement, led by the business community, to contribute to the culture shift needed to increase voter participation in our country’s elections.”<sup>38</sup>

“ This campaign isn’t about any particular party or candidate or issue – it’s about encouraging more people to vote without having to make the hard choice between going to work and going to the polls. ”

- CHIP BERGH  
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF LEVI STRAUSS & CO.



“ Demonstrating your company’s commitment to voting reinforces the idea that American businesses can protect our democracy. I have been heartened to see business leaders from every corner of the country and across a range of industries prioritizing the health of our democracy and I look forward to seeing this movement grow. ”

- ROSE MARCARIO  
CEO OF PATAGONIA



“ The purest expression of any person’s freedom occurs in the voting booth - it is our collective moral duty as CEOs to accommodate every citizen in pursuing that privilege. ”

- TODD CARMICHAEL  
CEO OF LA COLOMBE



MORE THAN 600 COMPANIES HAVE JOINED THE INITIATIVE, INCLUDING MANY THAT OPERATE IN OHIO:



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