

# Birmingham Business Alliance calls for racial inequality to be 'directly addressed'

Updated Jun 17, 2020; Posted Jun 17, 2020



The Birmingham Business Alliance's executive committee is calling for issues of racial inequality to be addressed.

By [William Thornton | wthornton@al.com](mailto:wthornton@al.com)

The executive committee of the Birmingham Business Alliance has released a statement calling on longstanding issues of racial inequality and social injustice to be “honestly and directly addressed.”

The statement was approved Tuesday during a special meeting of the committee called to draft a statement, according to Lauren Cooper, vice president of communications for the BBA. It came after “conversations within the committee” and statements by member companies of the BBA to the community and their employees.

“It was a very thoughtful process,” Cooper said.

The statement comes two weeks after the Birmingham region and many communities in America saw widespread demonstrations following the May 25 death of George Floyd in police custody in Minnesota. Four Minneapolis policemen were fired following Floyd’s death, with one charged with his murder and three others facing related charges. Floyd’s death, recorded on video, touched off protests across the U.S., with some continuing weeks later. [Downtown Birmingham saw civil unrest May 31 following demonstrations over Confederate monuments in Linn Park, with some businesses seeing break-ins, damage and fires.](#)

The statement reads:

*“As an organization headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama and focused on the future growth and health of our city and region, we are keenly aware of our civil rights history and its impact on our people and our business community. The recent deaths of George Floyd and others and related events are a stark reminder that we have profound issues in our country and our communities that need to be confronted. We are experiencing history and have a real opportunity for great and lasting progress if issues of racial inequality and social injustice are honestly and directly addressed.*

*“The Birmingham Business Alliance exists to promote growth, economic development and prosperity in our region. We believe that diversity, inclusion and economic equality are critical to our success as an organization and to the long-term success of our region and our State. We also believe that we will not achieve our goals if racial inequality and social injustice are allowed to continue.*

*“The leadership of the BBA is committed to being a leader in the Birmingham region in the effort to create positive change, and we are confident that our business community fully supports this commitment. The BBA has been working hard to develop a new strategic plan, and diversity and inclusion will be a key part of every aspect of that plan. Despite our deep sadness over recent events and current unrest, the BBA is optimistic about the opportunity we now have to make this a period of progress - one that will create more opportunities for all of our citizens and make us a better and stronger city and region for the next generation.”*

The BBA Executive Committee is a 14-member body consisting of Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin; Jefferson County Commissioner Steve Ammons; UAB President Ray Watts; Nelson Bean, Synovus Bank Division CEO; Alabama Power CEO Mark Crosswhite; Gregory Curran, Maynard Cooper & Gale chairman;

Nancy Goedecke, Mayer Electric CEO; Jim Gorrie, Brasfield & Gorrie CEO; Joe Hampton, Spire president; Dawn Sharff, Bradley managing partner; Sanjay Singh, Pack Health; Mark Tarr, Encompass Health CEO; John Turner, Regions Bank CEO and Tim Vines, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama CEO.

