



Virginia State Bar

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Dear Virginia lawyers:

Our country and our Commonwealth are quite obviously struggling, and mightily so, with issues of inequality and the pain, anger and unrest that inevitably result from that.

Because the Virginia State Bar is an official arm of the Supreme Court of Virginia, it is prohibited from taking a stance on specific political or ideological issues outside of the regulation of the legal profession or improvement to the quality of legal services. We understand the reasons behind this prohibition.

Still, when being sworn in as lawyers, we all took the oath to defend the Constitution of this Commonwealth and of the United States; and both Constitutions guarantee equal protection under the law. In addition, the Preamble to our Rules of Professional Conduct urges us to be mindful of deficiencies in the administration of justice. Virginia lawyers have long been instrumental in working, through legal means, to ensure and expand constitutional protections to citizens—with regard to voting, marriage, housing and a myriad of other rights. Moreover, and throughout our history, lawyers have been an essential part of the public dialogue; and we must continue to defend and protect citizens' rights, and, particularly, to speak for those who have no voice, or have been denied it.

I urge you to consider ways you, as a lawyer, can make a difference. We are problem solvers, critical thinkers and community servants. Our efforts will continue to be needed in the days, weeks, months, and even years ahead, as our Commonwealth and nation struggle toward the goal of a more perfect union.

Marni E. Byrum
President

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