To the Greater Sacramento Community:

The Nehemiah Emerging Leaders Program (NELP) was conceived to empower, elevate, and expose new and diverse leaders to the underrepresented power structure of Sacramento. After ten years of graduated classes, NELP alumni serve or have served on over 260 boards and commissions within this region and sit in leadership positions including as CEOs, heads of nonprofits, educators, elected officials, and governmental agency leaders.

As members of the community, the NELP Fellows and Sr. Fellows decry the violence and murder of Black and Brown people by the police, as well as the systemic racism of a criminal justice system that has few rules and even fewer consequences for those that abuse their authority. NELP stands in support of those in the streets across America in exercising their constitutionally protected right to speak truth to power and to give voice to the oppressed whose needs continue to go unmet.

In the cases of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Stephon Clark and far too many others, there are no "two sides of the story." These four human beings are dead, and the root cause is the persistence and pervasiveness of racism, whether by direct intention or embedded policies that allow law enforcement and other perpetrators involved a benefit of the doubt that we cannot assume will ever exist for Blacks in the United States.

There is no other side to this story. There is only the story of death, racism, and a persistent separate and unequal standard in the application of justice.

Though NELP has been able to make progress in the Sacramento community, there remains an inarguable gap in the prospects of so many Black Americans and others from communities of color. We invite you to view a four-minute video that illustrates this gap and communicates a lifetime of meaning: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5fbQ1-zps.

NELP remains committed to changing flaws in the systems of our community. Effective immediately, NELP Fellows, Sr. Fellows, Board Members, and Staff will commit to fight for social justice by focusing on the following:

- Creating task forces to change unfair and biased laws that hurt underrepresented community members;
- Partnering with local community members to push for systemic change;
- Expanding NELP curriculum to include a social justice component.

We love our community. The Sacramento region is our home. As leaders, we represent the breadth and diversity of this region. We have seen and experienced the best and the worst of what Sacramento has to offer and have dedicated our efforts to serving this region. We know that we can do better. But doing better requires getting off the sidelines and taking a stand. This is not about abstract politics, it’s about country. It’s about right and wrong. It’s about the moral imperative to change.

Sincerely,
The Fellows, Sr. Fellows, Staff, and Board of Directors of the Nehemiah Emerging Leaders Program