

A Statement in Support of  
The City of Pittsfield's  
Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The city of Pittsfield—its executive and legislative bodies, acting with magisterial approval—ratified a new city department. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The executive administrator of our city then exercised its lawful duty in identifying and retaining the experience and skills of the honorable Michael Obasohan.

Many attempts have been made to understand and overcome our city's racial inequities. Whether it was the mid-60's Human Relations Committee, which gave way to the short-lived 1968 Biracial Committee; or the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee and Human Rights Commission of today. However, the work of promoting justice and equity has too often been left to volunteerism. As compassionate, caring, and indefatigable as those volunteers may be, it is common sense that when a task is a person's job they are more likely to be effective in fulfilling the responsibilities and requirements to accomplish their task.

Now, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion finally exists, with the full authority of the city charter backing its mission and with a yearly allocation in the city budget. The Office, and Director Obasohan now has the authority of a departmental head . City Hall has finally committed to taking the first step of learning how to do better.

The Berkshire County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples proclaims our unconditional support for the existence of an Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Declares our solidarity in assisting the honorable Michael Obasohan, where our collective efforts can advance the mission of our branch, "to ensure the political, educational, social and economic equality of all rights for all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination"; and, Affirms our commitment to discerning between justice in action and in word.

As Maya Angelou said, "We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color." Let's move forward together with openness to learn and be self-reflective on this herculean journey of cultivating an environment of acceptance and appreciation for individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs and experiences.

Asé,  
Executive Committee  
Berkshire County Branch of The NAACP.