On March 9, 2015, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA) President Ilkka Kanerva (MP, Finland) appointed U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin to serve as the OSCE PA’s first Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism, and Intolerance (SRARI). Special Representative Cardin has been annually reappointed to the position since that time.

This report details Special Representative Cardin’s activities from July 5, 2019 – July 1, 2020 that, with the support of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, focus on the following four priorities the Special Representative has outlined: 1) anti-Semitism and community security; 2) anti-Muslim bigotry; 3) improving law enforcement and community relations with diverse communities; and 4) anti-migrant/refugee bias.

**Legislative Efforts**

- **Addressing increasing hate crimes and prejudice in the OSCE region** – Legislation that provides U.S. State Department funds to support civil society initiatives to address anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia impacting Jewish, Muslim, Afro-descent, Romani, migrant, refugee communities in Europe.

- **The Justice in Policing Act (S. 3912)** – This Democratic legislative package of police reforms, introduced in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd, would instate a ban on police chokeholds; a ban on no-knock warrants; limit the transfer of military equipment to police departments; more body cameras for police; eliminate qualified immunity; as well as Senator Cardin’s End Racial and Religious Profiling Act (ERRPA) and Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act (LETIA).

- **The Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act (S. 3063)** – This legislation, also known as LETIA, would establish a system of grants and incentives for law enforcement agencies to adopt community-oriented policing standards, set limits on police misconduct, develop new accreditation standards, and improve transparency and oversight.

- **Protecting Human Rights During Pandemic Act (S. 2819)** – This bipartisan, bicameral legislation would require the State Department and USAID to take steps, through diplomacy and development assistance, to prevent human rights abuses from being carried out under the guise of response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
• **A Resolution Celebrating the Heritage of Romani Americans (S.Res.148)** – This resolution would express remembrance for the genocide of the Roma by Nazi Germany and its Axis partners and commemorates the 75th anniversary of the destruction of the “Gypsy Family Camp” where Romani people were interned at Auschwitz.

• **The REUNITE Act (S. 3227)** – This act, also known as the Reunite Every Unaccompanied Newborn Infant, Toddler and other children Expeditiously Act, would require that the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services ensure the immediate reunification of children separated from their apprehended parent or guardian at or near ports of entry. The Act would also require that the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Health and Human Services publish guidance describing the coordinated efforts the agencies will undertake to reunite apprehended parents or guardians and children; jointly establish an interagency office responsible for expediting the reunification of alien children and parents; and introduce secure alternatives to detention programs.

• **End Racial and Religious Profiling Act (S. 2355)** - This legislation, also known as ERRPA, makes it clear that law enforcement actions based on discriminatory profiling such as an entry ban on Muslims are both inconsistent with U.S. values and ineffective. The bill would ban discriminatory profiling by all levels of law enforcement nationwide. It is designed to enforce the constitutional right to equal protection of laws through changing policies and procedures for law enforcement and promoting best practices in community-based law enforcement.

• **D.C. Statehood Voting Rights Act (H.R.51/S.631)** - This bill provides for admission into the United States of the state of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth, composed of most of the territory of the District of Columbia. The commonwealth shall be admitted to the Union on an equal footing with the other states.

• **Introduce Bill to Install Statue of Justice Thurgood Marshall in U.S. Capitol (S.3863)** - This bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to install the statue of Justice Thurgood Marshall in U.S. Capitol to replace the bust of Roger Brooke Taney in the Old Supreme Court Chamber of the United States Capitol. Roger Brooke Taney is the author of the infamous Dred Scott decision that ruled that African-Americans were not U.S. citizens and that Congress could not prohibit slavery. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, is the first African-American to serve on the nation’s highest court.

• **Equal Rights Amendment (S.J. Res. 6)** – Legislation that would immediately revive consideration of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution to ensure that the Constitution guarantees full and equal protections to women.
• **Commemorating the legal end of slavery in the United States (S.Res.547)** – This resolution designates “Juneteenth Independence Day” in recognition of June 19, 1865, the date on which slavery legally came to an end in the United States.

• **Democracy Restoration Act (S.1588)** - This legislation would reduce recidivism rates by restoring voting rights to individuals after they have served their time and have been released from incarceration. Studies indicate that former prisoners who have voting rights restored are less likely to reoffend, and that disenfranchisement hinders their rehabilitation and reintegration into their community.

• **National Security Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Act (S. 924)** – This bill would require each national security agency to make available to the public, to appropriate congressional committees, and to the national security agency workforce, a report on its diversity and inclusion efforts. The bill defines "diversity" as gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, and other demographic categories. It also requires each such agency to: develop a system to collect and analyze applicant employment data to identify areas for improvement in attracting diverse talent, with emphasis on senior and management positions; seek a diverse and talented pool of employment applicants; create opportunities for senior personnel to participate in outreach events and to discuss issues relating to diversity and inclusion; and expand training on bias in the workplace and flexible work policies.

• **LOVE Act (S.1420)** – This bill would require the Department of State to review employee terminations at the State Department in the 1950s and 1960s to determine who was wrongfully terminated due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation (known as the Lavender Scare). The bill contains an apology from Congress for its role in encouraging the termination of State Department employees based on sexual orientation.

• **Establishing World Refugee Day (S.Res.552)** – This resolution would commemorate World Refugee Day. The resolution acknowledges the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children forced to flee their homes because of persecution or conflict while calling on the United States government to uphold its leadership role in responding to the global refugee crisis.

• **Disability Integration Act (S.117)** – This bill would prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities who need long-term services and support, and for other purposes. The Act would clarify and strengthen the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensures that States provide long term services that foster integration and independent living, and establishes requirements for State public reporting.
• **The NO BAN Act (S. 1123)** – This legislation repeals the three “Muslim Ban” executive order/presidential proclamations, repeals “extreme vetting” procedures, and expands congressional oversight by amending the Immigration and Nationality Act.

• **The Protecting Faith-Based and Nonprofit Organizations from Terrorism Act (S. 1539)** – This bill authorizes $75 million annually for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) for FY 2020-2024. NSGP supports the efforts of nonprofits and houses of worships to protect their facilities and personnel with equipment and other forms of security enhancements.

• **The Guaranteed Refugee Ceiling Enhancement Act (S. 1088)** – This bill sets a minimum refugee admissions cap of 95,000 for any given year.

• **The Refugee Protection Act (S. 2936)** – This bill would expand the US Refugee Admissions Program, increase protections for refugees, restores due process and dignity for asylum-seekers, and expands protections for immigrants cooperating with law enforcement and foreign nationals assisting US troops.

• **Girls’ Leadership, Engagement, Agency, and Development Act of 2019 (S. 2766)** – This bipartisan legislation seeks to strengthen girls’ participation in democracy, human rights, and governance worldwide by directing the State Department and USAID to develop and implement a strategy for achieving these goals.

• **A resolution commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz (S. Res. 48)** – This bipartisan resolution, which was agreed to in the Senate, commemorated the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by Allied Forces during World War II.

• **Keeping Women and Girls Safe from the Start Authorization Act of 2020 (S. 4003)** - Against the backdrop of the largest refugee crisis in recorded history, the new bipartisan legislation seeks to bolster current United States’ and international efforts to address gender-based violence during humanitarian emergencies by affirming U.S. support for prevention and response programs and by better equipping humanitarian actors with the resources necessary to confront both present and future challenges.
Meetings, Consultations, Events
In collaboration with the Helsinki Commission

- **July 2, 2020** – Hearings: HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME: Implications for U.S. Leadership

- **July 1, 2020** – Democratic Policy and Communications Committee Hearing on D.C. Statehood
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD49sHZHEoA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD49sHZHEoA)


- **June 12, 2020** - Briefing: 8:46 (GEORGE FLOYD): A Time for Transformation at Home and Abroad
  [https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/846-george-floyd](https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/846-george-floyd)

- **June 3, 2020** - Cardin Statement on International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

- **June 2, 2020** - Cardin, Van Hollen Introduce Bill to Install Statue of Justice Thurgood Marshall in U.S. Capitol

- **May 26, 2020** – OSCE PA Web Dialogue “Protecting refugees and migrants during the pandemic”

- **May 25-26, 2020** - OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting: Intolerance And Discrimination During Pandemic

- **January 29, 2020** - Hearing: Human Rights and Democracy: Obstacles and Opportunities in the OSCE Region

- **December 5, 2019** - Hearing: Public Diplomacy, Democracy, and Global Leadership

- **October 23, 2019** - Staff Briefing: Addressing Hate Crimes in Europe and the United States

- **September 11, 2019** - Hearing: The State of Diversity and Inclusion in Europe: Race, Rights, and Politics
• July 18, 2019 - Briefing: Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing: Toward a Unified Future
  https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/truth-reconciliation-and-healing

• July 16, 2019 - Hearing: Responding to Hate: The Role of Religious Actors
  https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/responding-hate

• July 5, 2019 - Event: Countering Hate: Lessons from the Past, Leadership for the Future – a side event at the 28th Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Luxembourg
  https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/countering-hate-lessons-past-leadership-future

Select Letters, Statements, Speeches, & Social Media

• June 27, 2020 - Cardin Statement on LGBTQ Pride Month 2020

• June 26, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Warner, Kaine Call on McConnell to Bring D.C. Statehood Up for a Vote

• June 26, 2020 - Cardin Calls Justice in Policing Act Transformational, Says McConnell Should Bring It to the Senate Floor

• June 26, 2020 - Cardin, Colleagues Introduce “No Check, No Sale” Bill to Close Loophole Allowing Gun Sales Without A Completed Background Check

• June 25, 2020 - Congressional record statement - Op-Ed by The Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., MP on Racism
  See Appendix II

• June 25, 2020 - Baltimore Congressional Delegation Announces More Than $450,000 to Support Minority- and Women-Owned Businesses and Underserved Community Entrepreneurs

• June 24, 2020 - Cardin, Senate Democrats Introduce Legislation to Rename All Bases & Other Military Assets Named for the Confederacy Within One Year

• June 22, 2020 - Cardin Statement on World Refugee Day

• June 20, 2020 - Cardin Commemorates the 20th World Refugee Day

• June 18, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen and Carper Introduce Legislation to Strip the President’s Ability to Federalize D.C. Police, Control D.C. National Guard

- June 18, 2020 - Cardin Praises SCOTUS Decision on DACA, Says Congress Must Now Act

- June 18, 2020 - Cardin Statement on Juneteenth

- June 17, 2020 - Cardin, Six other Senators, send letter to USAID Acting Administrator Barsa regarding Islamophobic and anti-LGBT rhetoric from political appointees
  https://www.cardin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Letter%20to%20Barsa%20Regarding%20Appointee%20Comments_FINAL.pdf


- June 16, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Colleagues Push to Bring Equality Act to a Vote Following SCOTUS Ruling

- June 15, 2020 - Cardin Statement on Supreme Court Ruling Upholding LGBTQ Rights

- June 12, 2020 - Maryland Delegation Members Join Maryland Attorney General Frosh’s COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force

- June 11, 2020 - Cardin Floor Statement on the Justice in Policing Act

- June 8, 2020 - Cardin, Bicameral Democrats Call for Nationwide Police Overhaul

- June 5, 2020 - Cardin Praises the House Introduction of Legislation Providing Incentives to Minimize Incidents of Misconduct, and Enhance Accountability for Police Departments

- June 5, 2020 - Cardin Calls for Legislation to End Systemic Racism in Policing and the Criminal Justice System

- June 4, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Democratic Senators Demand Details, Cost of Staging Active Duty Troops in National Capital Region

- June 4, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Democratic Senate: Urge DeVos to Rescind Harmful Title IX Rule and Focus on Student Safety

- **June 3, 2020** - Cardin Commemorates the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

- **May 26, 2020** - Cardin Calls for Federal Civil Rights Investigation in Killing of George Floyd

- **May 22, 2020** - Cardin, Van Hollen Call on ICE to Answer Critical Questions on Plans to Stop the Spread of COVID-19 in Maryland

- **May 20, 2020** - Cardin Statement on World Press Freedom Day 2020

- **May 11, 2020** - Cardin, Colleagues Urge State Department, USAID Protect Global LGBTQI Population During Coronavirus Pandemic

- **May 8, 2020** - Cardin Statement on Arrests in the Murder of Ahmaud Arbery

- **May 7, 2020** - Bipartisan, Bicameral Group of Lawmakers Introduces Legislation to Counter Human Rights Abuses Worldwide Amidst Coronavirus Pandemic

- **May 7, 2020** - Baltimore Congressional Delegation Announces $500,000 for Morgan State University Historical Preservation

- **May 5, 2020** - Maryland Congressional Delegation Announces More Than $46 Million in Additional Funding for Maryland Colleges, Including $44 Million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

- **April 29, 2020** - Cardin, Colleagues Urge the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to Reinstate Vital Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data Collection


- **April 28, 2020** - Cardin, Van Hollen, Hoyer Welcome Expansion of Federal Second Chance Pell Experiment to Maryland HBCUs
• April 27, 2020 - Cardin Statement at the Meeting of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Bureau

• April 27, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Colleagues Call on DeVos to Reverse Course and Allow DACA Students to Access Emergency Financial Aid Secured in CARES Act

• April 21, 2020 - Cardin Statement on Trump Suspension of Immigration

• April 17, 2020 - Cardin Statement on the Five-Year Anniversary of the Death of Freddie Gray, Jr.

• April 7, 2020 - Cardin, Schumer, Shaheen, and Small Business Committee Democrats Urge Trump Administration to Reserve a Portion of Paycheck Protection Program Funding for Underserved Borrowers

• March 24, 2020 - Cardin Tells Pompeo to Stop Using Term “Wuhan Virus”

• March 19, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen and Colleagues Press Coronavirus Task Force on Situation in Nursing Homes and Preparedness for Seniors, People with Disabilities

• March 10, 2020 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Klobuchar Reintroduce Legislation to Bring Harriet Tubman Statue to U.S. Capitol

• March 6, 2020 - Cardin Commemorates the 55th Anniversary of “Bloody Sunday”

• March 6, 2020 - Maryland Congressional Delegation Talks Public Education with Maryland’s HBCU Presidents

• March 4, 2020 - Maryland Congressional Team Announces nearly $1.2 Million for Bowie State University to Support Diverse STEM Teacher Pipeline
• February 26, 2020 - Cardin Calls Black History Month a Reminder of the Need to Guarantee the Right to Vote Regardless of Race

• February 19, 2020 - Cardin joins Senate Democrats to Urge Secretary Azar to Halt Rule Expanding Federally Sanctioned Discrimination

• January 28, 2020 - Cardin, Murkowski Applaud Virginia's Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

• January 27, 2020 - Cardin Commemorates Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

• January 23, 2020 - Cardin, Rosen, Lankford, Menendez, Cramer Introduce Bipartisan Resolution Commemorating 75th Anniversary of Liberation of Auschwitz by Allied Forces

• January 17, 2020 - Cardin: Martin Luther King Jr. Led a Movement Guided by Peace and Compassion that Challenged the Forces of Hate and Intolerance

• January 16, 2020 - Cardin, Colleagues Slam NLRB Proposal to Strip Students Employed by Private Universities of Workplace Rights

• January 14, 2020 - Cardin, Murkowski Encourage States to Complete Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

• December 19, 2019 - Never Again: Cardin Says Spending Package Elevates Holocaust Education, Supports Holocaust Survivors and Expands Program to Protect Synagogues and Houses of Worship from Terrorism

• December 19, 2019 - Cardin Calls for New Police Training to Improve Accountability

• December 12, 2019 - Cardin Statement on Jersey City Shooting at Kosher Supermarket

• December 6, 2019 - Cardin Convenes Roundtable Discussion with Montgomery County Women Business Leaders
- Reject Proposed
- nthal Applaud Adoption of
- ugee Protection

- November 25, 2019 - Cardin Joins Senate Dems To Urge HUD To Reject Proposed Changes To The Fair Housing Act's Disparate Impact Standard
- November 22, 2019 - Cardin Announces New Cosponsors to Bipartisan ERA Resolution
- November 21, 2019 - Cardin Joins Colleagues to Introduce Bicameral Refugee Protection Act of 2019
- November 13, 2019 - Cardin, Senate Democrats Introduce House-Passed Violence Against Women Act
- November 6, 2019 - Cardin Statement on the Equal Rights Amendment
- November 1, 2019 - Cardin, Collins Introduce Bill to Promote Girls' Leadership and Political Participation Around the World
- November 1, 2019 - Senate Passes Cardin, Rubio Resolution Recognizing National Women's Small Business Month
- November 1, 2019 - Cardin, Cramer, Rosen, Rubio and Blumenthal Applaud Adoption of Holocaust Education Amendment
- October 31, 2019 - Cardin and Young Introduce Resolution Honoring Sikh Community
- October 24, 2019 - Cardin Commemorates the Life of Congressman Elijah Cummings
- October 22, 2019 - Cardin Questions State Dept. Official about War Crimes Committed by Turkey at SFRC Hearing
- October 15, 2019 - Cardin Statement on Hispanic Heritage Month
- October 7, 2019 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Congressional Leaders File Bipartisan Amicus Brief in Support of DACA in The Supreme Court
- September 27, 2019 - Cardin Condemns Trump Administration Decision to Cut Refugee Admissions

- September 11, 2019 - Cardin, Van Hollen, Sarbanes, Raskin, Trone Announce $50K for Montgomery County MLK Day of Service

- August 30, 2019 - Cardin, Van Hollen and Colleagues Demand Answers from HHS on Sudden End to Women’s Health Helpline

- August 30, 2019 - Cardin, Van Hollen Announce $2.79 Million to Combat Violence Against Women in Maryland

- August 29, 2019 - Cardin, Van Hollen and Colleagues Demand Trump Administration End Remain in Mexico Policy

- August 21, 2019 - Cardin Statement on President Trump Calling Jews “Disloyal” for Supporting Democrats

- August 15, 2019 - Cardin Statement on Israel Barring Congresswomen from Visiting

- August 6, 2019 – Cardin Statement on the 54th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965

- August 1, 2019 - Cardin, Civil Rights Leadership Groups Call for Passage of the End Racial and Religious Profiling Act, Legislation to End Profiling By Law Enforcement Nationwide

- July 26, 2019 - Cardin Statement on the 29th Anniversary of the Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act

- July 26, 2019 - Following Visit To Inspect Southern Border Facilities, Senate Democrats Demand Trump Administration Immediately Address Issues Including The Mistreatment Of Children And Families And Lax Health And Safety Standards

• July 19, 2019 - Cardin, Cramer, Rosen Call for Strengthening Health Services for Holocaust Survivors

• July 18, 2019 - Cardin, Rubio Urge DOJ to Help Hold Accountable Masterminds of the 1994 Bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) Jewish Community Center

• July 17, 2019 - Cardin Introduces Legislation to Increase SBA Lending to Entrepreneurs in Underserved Communities

• July 11, 2019 - Cardin Responds to President Trump’s Attempts to Redefine Human Rights

• July 11, 2019 - Cardin Statement on Possible ICE Raids in Baltimore and Nationwide
Appendix I

Mandate of the Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance

The mandate of the OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance is to:

- Raise awareness in and report to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the persisting problem of prejudice and discrimination in the OSCE area, including anti-Semitism, other religion- and race-based intolerance and other forms of intolerance;
- Raise awareness in and report to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly on the track records of OSCE participating States in combating these problems;
- Advise the Assembly on the implementation of its agreed policies in these matters as well as on the development of new policies and strategies, including on how to protect the individuals and communities affected;
- Seek to promote dialogue and exchange of best practices within the Assembly on combating these problems, and;
- Communicate with relevant actors within the OSCE who work on combating prejudice and discrimination in the OSCE area, including anti-Semitism, other religion- and race-based intolerance and other forms of intolerance.
Appendix II

Congressional record statement - Op-Ed by The Hon. Hedy Fry, P.C., MP on Racism

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BENJAMIN L. CARDIN (D-MD)
June 30, 2020

CONSTRUCTIVE INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND TOLERANCE ISSUES

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as we grapple with the manifestations of racism and intolerance in our society here in the United States, it is important to remember that we have friends and allies across the globe who face similar challenges. They support U.S. leadership and seek our engagement on issues of common concern.

Throughout my career in Congress in both the House and Senate, I have been fortunate to participate in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE PA), a critical venue for international engagement. I have served as the OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance for the last five years, after serving as a committee officer and then a Vice President of the assembly. It has been a rewarding experience working with like-minded parliamentarians from Canada and across Europe to advocate for human rights and to promote democratic development.

Of course, as we engage on these issues, we must be candid about our own shortcomings, which I did in a recent web dialogue with dozens of parliamentarians from across the OSCE region on the impact of the current pandemic on diverse societies. I noted how minority and immigrant communities are more vulnerable to the harmful impacts of the pandemic, in part due to past inequalities that inadequate healthcare and economic responses are exacerbating. I also raised the efforts to respond to the killing of George Floyd, including reforms designed to rebuild trust between police officers and the communities they are sworn to protect and serve.

Following this web event, Dr. Hedy Fry, the head of the Canadian Delegation to the OSCE PA, contacted me. She shared with me an opinion editorial she wrote which describes, in equally candid terms, how the events in the United States have made Canadians more aware of inequalities and injustices in their own country, and the need for Canada to respond appropriately. Her remarks illustrate that the U.S. can exercise global leadership by serving as an example of self-examination followed by corrective action. If we do it, we can encourage other countries to do the same.

I want to thank our friends in the Canadian parliament for their collaboration in the OSCE PA and support for U.S. initiatives. I am grateful that we have worked so closely together over the years toward the common goal of making this world a better place, and I look forward to our continued collaboration. I would like to share Dr. Fry’s remarks with my Senate colleagues; therefore, I ask unanimous consent to have her op-ed appear in the Record following my remarks.

# # #
The terrible acts of violence against Black persons in the United States has brought racism, to the forefront, in Canada. But, racism has also been systemic, though insidious here, for generations. Not as openly violent, as in the US, but present nonetheless, in our institutions, workplaces, schools and society.

Over the last 30 years, Canada enacted progressive legislation to protect minorities: the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Employment Equity, the Citizenship Act, the Canadian Human Rights Act, the Multiculturalism Act, and anti-hate laws.

Yet data shows that Indigenous peoples still have the highest suicide rate, poorest health outcomes, and most incarcerations; that visible minorities, despite education, are under employed and under-paid; that Black men are carded and suspected of criminality.

Racism is rooted in colonialism. Colonialism sought to tame the savages, to bring them to Christianity, to de-culturalize native populations “for their own good”. It also stereotyped them as inferior, less educable, more “savage and untamed” in their reactions and therefore less trustworthy and prone to criminality.

Stereotyping is the root of xenophobia.

Residential schools in Canada, apartheid in South Africa, and slavery in the Americas were all based on the presumption that Native peoples were one step above animals, barely. The so-called “science” of eugenics, in the early 20th century, confirmed this.

The bubbling cauldron of anti-Black violence and xenophobia has historically never been far from the surface in the USA and is entrenched in all of its institutions.

In Canada, the stereotyping and institutional bias is more insidious and subtle. Though the violence against Black communities is most apparent in some areas of Canada. The violence against Indigenous peoples is evidenced across the country and this age of ubiquitous cameras record and bring them to light.

Systemic racism is never far beneath the surface. COVID19 exposed this. Crisis brings anger and fear. It cracks the thin veneer of tolerance that seems to exist in quiet, polite times. It seeks to blame “the other”. Fear caused the eruption of anti-Chinese hate in Canada and amplified the reality of Black and Indigenous lives.

We are all shaken and empathetic.

But our denial and ignorance can no longer stand.

We must listen and act. We need to collect disaggregated data, based on ethnicity, Indigenous status, religion, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, and disability. We must match that data against employment, incarceration, health outcomes, socioeconomic...
status and participation in the social political, economic and cultural life of our nation. This is called getting to the factual evidence.

We must use that evidence to educate the public and teach unvarnished history, in our schools. It will then become apparent that the Chinese and Japanese have been in British Columbia for 160 years; that the Chinese built a railroad that united our nation from sea to sea; that they, the Sikhs and Indigenous peoples fought in WWI and II; that they returned to face discrimination and hardship, but stayed and built a nation.

We must teach about the internment of Ukrainians, the arrest of Italians, and the antisemitism that turned away Jews from our shores during World War II. We must acknowledge the ugliness of our past and learn from it.

We must then take steps to train and sensitise our institutions; we must make them welcoming to the diversity of Canadians that live here. We must set policies, programs and measurable goals to eradicate systemic discrimination. We must track our progress and report to Canadians. We must, finally, aim for an inclusive society that will respect and harness the benefits which diversity brings.

It is a long road. But if we begin now, it is a worthy goal to show the world that it is possible to put aside conflict and live together, as many different peoples, in peaceful coexistence.

In order to build a strong, peaceful prosperous nation, everyone must belong—and everyone must build it together.

Stay well,

The Honourable Hedy Fry, P.C., MP Vancouver Centre