

May 20, 2019

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Howard County Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. My name is Christine Horn, though I most commonly am called Tina. I am deeply and profoundly honored by the County Executive's trust and regard in nominating me for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission. I hope to earn your trust and regard as well.

A little bit about me, I have been a Howard County resident for almost 20 years, having grown up in deeply racially segregated mid-Michigan. I fell in love with Jim Rouse's vision for a better world and am grateful to live in Columbia and raise our son in Wilde Lake. I've worked in non-profits my entire professional career, including 20 years in association management and 9 years today at Enterprise Community Partners. I have been involved with the Movement for Black Lives since it began working here in Columbia in 2014. In that time, the most important lesson I have learned about systemic and structuralized racism and other oppressions is how very much I still have to learn, both about myself and how I have internalized those messages, and how those systems and structures operate regardless of my ability to see them.

I am excited by the past work of the Commission and believe that it has a good mix of education and celebration and action. I also very clearly hear the call to service, as Dr. Ball described earlier this year, "a chance to harness [Howard County's] wealth and power to change the lives of the poor and disenfranchised." That is an important consideration to me in honoring the Rev. Dr. King's life and legacy. I am not old enough to remember Dr. King while he was alive, but I have heard stories and impressions from my parents of just how hated he was and how badly much of the country reacted to his messages of peace and economic and racial justice at that time. Dr. King is much loved now, but I wonder if that is because we have lost or set aside his more challenging calls for justice and peace. I hope for the opportunity to explore his more challenging calls publicly and together, as Howard Countians. We have good reasons to explore Dr. King's more challenging calls. Dr. Ball described it well when he said that "we live in challenging and controversial times." I take his call to "be even more courageous [and] to do a little bit more" personally. This is daily work and it is local work to Howard County. No matter how well we do here, or how well we profess we are doing, we will always be able to do more and to do it better. That applies in our educational opportunities around Dr. King's life and legacy, both for students and adults. That applies in our celebrations and it applies in the service we must do for each other. I wish to offer my time, talents, energy, and networks to be a part of that work.

With that, I would like to ask for your trust and your vote for a seat on the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission. Thank you very much.