

# Cooperative Credit Union Association

*Creating Cooperative Power*

Recent unfolding events have been painful to witness and are fueled by a long history of fear, injustice and inequality. The ensuing demonstrations and unrest have struck many parts of our nation, including areas within the Cooperative Credit Union Association footprint. Nationwide protests have brought the scourge of racism to the forefront. Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. Now is the time to act.

As I have reflected on these events, I believe that each of us as credit union leaders can make a difference. But for true change, it requires going beyond making pro-social statements or feeling empathy toward those suffering the effects of violence and racism. It will come down to each of us making a difference in our own day-to-day relationships, both professionally and in our personal lives. Our collective credit union history is a proud one of inclusion: serving the underserved, assisting immigrants, and helping people from all walks of life have better opportunities in our country. In many ways, what credit unions do best is provide opportunity, often to those who have been denied elsewhere.

I want positive and substantive change to result from recent events and the injustices that we have witnessed for far too long. For the credit union community, greater financial inclusion is one outcome for which we can fight. With financial inclusion comes greater opportunity. There is no doubt that much work needs to be done to reach true equality and permanent systemic change in our country's institutions. We draw from the strength that is at the core of our philosophy "people helping people." This mission resonates even more in these current times. Credit unions do not help just some people, or certain people, we help all people.

In the months and years ahead, credit unions will build off our collective efforts to further champion economic justice by committing to strengthening our communities, one person at a time. And, for us at the Cooperative Credit Union Association, we look forward to enhancing the dialogue by hosting a series of educational discussions with community leaders and equality advocates as a way to build greater awareness of the dignity of all people and the role credit unions play in their financial well-being.

Ron

**Ronald McLean**

President/CEO

Cooperative Credit Union Association, Inc.