

Statement of Unity and Support by the Northbrook Chapter of SPEBSQSA

Our values as an organization are rooted in the unified Society Vision for *Everyone In Harmony* – and as such, we stand firmly in solidarity with all individuals who continue to struggle against systemic racism and discrimination in their fight for their own liberties.

Given the recent events in our national conversation, we are all being reminded of our racial history in the treatment of others that we somehow think are different. We acknowledge that our own hobby's musical heritage originates with African-American roots and therefore we absolutely cannot ignore the continued racism feeding the civil unrest happening to our country today. The history of the Barbershop Harmony Society itself has a discriminatory past that we are not proud of, but it is a hard lesson that we have learned. It is foundational behind our current vision of *Everyone In Harmony*, a guiding principle that is desperately needed *now* more now than ever. We are all one people, and we all deserve to be treated well – and never, *never* suffer discrimination.

Moving forward, we recognize our opportunity and responsibility to listen louder, to exercise empathy, and to give ourselves permission to grow. Some of our most cherished performances capture various aspects of the human experience we've all shared at points in time: fighting for independence in our *Les Miserables* contest package, longing for a brighter tomorrow in *Over the Rainbow*, and keeping hope in our *Tribute to World Peace*.

Discrimination in any form is, quite simply, in conflict with the ethics that we value in our organization. We are all better when we work together and share in our burdens. In that context, in this current time – in this moment of our history – a large burden is being unfairly carried by a racial minority. They need to know that they should not have to carry that load by themselves – that they matter. Therefore, let this be known:

We stand in solidarity with all organizations and communities who strive to answer the call for equity and justice, especially during the recent violence experienced in diverse communities.

We also recognize this sentiment is long overdue. Truthfully, we needed time to educate ourselves and have these difficult, but important, conversations. Of course, the dialogue should not end here. As members we will continue to ask, listen, and improve as we strive to make the New Tradition risers a more inclusive and welcoming space together.