From:	Farrell, Robert
To:	DOF-ALL EMPLOYEES
Subject:	The Branch
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Good afternoon everyone;

It is hard to comprehend the pace of change that we are living through right now, first the disruptions of every facet of life in response to COVID-19 and now with the worldwide protests and calls for ending racial inequality. We can take a lot of pride in the way VDOF has responded to COVID-19, with our usual commitment to service and our quiet, get-it-done attitude.

Now we have to challenge ourselves again – in response to the legacy of discrimination and racial inequality in America and in Virginia – to define our role as an agency, as a family of public servants, and as individuals. Governor Northam has demonstrated leadership by acknowledging the legacy of inequality and committing himself and his administration to addressing it on many fronts including improving access to health care and education, and changes in the criminal justice system.

Within our own agency, as the VDOF and as individuals we need to take an honest look at how our actions, our reactions, or our inaction may be hindering us from being an agency where all people feel respected, welcome and appreciated. We have to be willing to admit and acknowledge that we all have our own cultural backgrounds, personal beliefs, and biases - that we are all human. We then have to see how our perception of others may be impacting how we serve them and make plans and take action to try to serve those groups that challenge us as well as we serve the groups where we feel most comfortable.

This is not something that I take lightly. I am committing our agency to looking at who we serve and how we can do better at ensuring that everyone in Virginia benefits from the great work that we do. As always, I look forward to working with all of you to make VDOF the best it can be.

To see the facts of modern racial inequality in Virginia, please see this article from the Richmond Times Dispatch:
https://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/by-the-numbers-amid-the-protests-taking-stock-of-racial-inequality-in-virginia/article_69732519-45f2-56ca-a418-4f2b2f1d9e16.html

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