



VIA FAX (206-682-7570) AND U.S. MAIL

Mr. Kevin Johnson
CEO
Starbucks Corporation
2401 Utah Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98134

April 16, 2018

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law ("Lawyers' Committee") writes to raise serious concerns regarding the recent arrests of two African American men at a Starbucks in Center City Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization formed in 1963 at the request of President Kennedy to involve the private bar in providing legal services to address racial discrimination. The Lawyers' Committee is committed to tackling racism and discrimination in public accommodations and ensuring equal access for all through litigation, outreach and advocacy.

Based on recent press reports, it is our understanding that on Thursday, April 12, 2018, two African American men waiting for a business colleague were wrongfully arrested at a Starbucks in Center City Philadelphia, Pennsylvania after the store's manager called the local police. According to their attorney, the men were detained for nearly *nine hours* before being released without being charged of any crime. This recent report and additional information reviewed by the Lawyers' Committee involving a complaint by an African American customer at a Los Angeles Starbucks store suggests that the Company may be engaging in a pattern of unlawful discrimination against African American customers.

Federal, state, and local civil rights laws prohibit racial discrimination in places of public accommodation, including places like Starbucks where food is sold for consumption. *See* Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000(a); Pennsylvania Human Relations Act of 1955, P.L. 744, No. 222, *as amended*; and Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance, §9-1106, *as amended*. Under these critical civil rights statutes, Starbucks must afford all customers, regardless of their race, equal treatment and the full and equal enjoyment of its goods, services and facilities. Fifty years following the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. we are still working to fulfill the goals of these important laws.

The Lawyers' Committee strongly believes that racism and discrimination must be rooted out from public accommodations, and that minority customers should not fear

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being arrested for frequenting their local coffee shop. The recent actions that Starbucks has undertaken in response to this horrific incident, including issuing a public apology to the two men, and promising to review company policies and implement unconscious bias training are important first steps. However, we believe that the Company must and can do much more to remedy these issues. Starbucks must commit to comprehensive, company-wide reforms to ensure an incident like this never happens again.

We request a meeting with members of your team to discuss concrete strategies to create an environment that is respectful, safe and inclusive for all customers. Our attorneys have significant experience working on consumer profiling issues and have collaborated extensively with major national retailers accused of racial profiling to design robust and meaningful anti-discrimination measures. Please contact Dariely Rodriguez, Director of the Economic Justice Project at droduiguez@lawyerscommittee.org by April 23rd to schedule a meeting. Also, please note below that we have copied the Public Interest Law Center, our Philadelphia-based affiliate and partner.

Thank you,

Kristen Clarke
President & Executive Director
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

CC:

John Kelly, SVP, Global Social Impact & Public Policy (via email)
Starbucks Corporation

Jennifer Clarke, Executive Director (via email)
The Public Interest Law Center

Dariely Rodriguez, Economic Justice Project Director
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

Courtney Alexander, Counsel
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law