

PACB President: Let's celebrate our differences to strengthen our industry and nation

The following is a statement by PACB President and CEO Kevin L. Shivers following recent disturbing events that took place at our state and nation's capitols:

I have been sickened by the events this week in Harrisburg and Washington, DC. I was disgusted to watch elected officials in both parties flout the law for political gain. I also am disgusted by the way both major political parties are using our differences as wedge issues to divide us in order to score quick political points.

PACB as an association owes its very existence to the First Amendment to the US Constitution. It has been infuriating to watch individuals destroy our institutions, our businesses, and our communities, while hiding behind the free-speech protections enshrined in that document. It's even more sickening to watch elected officials – from the president down - in both parties, embrace mob rule and egg them on.

I'm not sure I can say the last election was the most divisive in my lifetime. But it depends on the lens one uses to view and process these events. The highly competitive national election played out during the midst of a global pandemic and ensuing violence in communities across Pennsylvania and the nation certainly has put us all on edge.

But what really has me troubled, especially during the last year, was that I felt like our elected leaders were exploiting our differences and using them for political gain. As if being different is a bad thing.

Community- bank leaders understand that growth in a highly competitive industry like ours cannot be achieved by a single person or a singular mindset. The foundation of the community bank culture is the premise that our success can be achieved when each employee feels valued and empowered to fully engage in their work every day.

A truly diverse and inclusive workforce where employees of different backgrounds and perspectives each can impact the business from a unique vantage point is a powerfully positive force that fosters innovation for customers and an engaging environment for employees.

As a middle-aged, Caucasian male, I am not an expert on the subject of biases, diversity, equity, and inclusion. But I do have a voice in that conversation.

As an organizational leader, regardless of my gender, race, or creed, I do have a responsibility to lead that conversation – both for my team and our great organization. Commitment to inclusion and diversity begins at the top.

If you have not had a chance to read the latest edition of our Hometown Banker magazine, I encourage you to do so now. <https://hometown-banker.thenewslinkgroup.org/pub-2-2020-issue-11/>

There are a number of great reflections in the magazine by bank executives and industry leaders who offer valuable insight into this critical discussion. Throughout the year, PACB will incorporate into its conferences, educational seminars and meetings topics related to the DEI conversation.

I am very proud that PACB has launched a task force on diversity and inclusion and encourage you to join this important work. The task force soon will begin its work and PACB is arranging for nationally-recognized leaders on the subject to help facilitate the task force's work.

Inclusion comes from open interactions with people who think differently than us. It comes from teams that collaborate across disciplines, identities, and cultures.

If only our elected representatives in Harrisburg and Washington shared the same perspective. For the sake of the Commonwealth and nation, let's hope our leaders learned a lesson from the embarrassing spectacle that occurred earlier this week and can come together for the sake of our nation and the free world.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Shivers, CAE
President and CEO
Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers

Kevin L. Shivers, CAE
President and CEO
Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers (PACB)
3211 N. Front Street, Suite 102
Harrisburg, PA 17110
Phone: (717) 231-7447

www.pacb.org

Banking education builds a better organization – Follow our [Calendar!](#)

