

Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach stands in solidarity with **Black Lives Matter**

“The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands in times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

As a community-based social justice organization that was founded upon the principle of equal access to justice under the law for underserved communities of color, API Legal Outreach condemns white supremacy and all forms of racial discrimination. We recognize the current historic moment of racial reckoning and stand firmly in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, the grassroots civil rights movement led by Black activists, scholars, policymakers, families, and friends. We owe them a debt of gratitude for once again leading the national movement for racial justice for all communities of color.

We also recognize that the support for the Black Lives Matter movement has been wavering over the past months but we must keep the dialogue going long-term to push for positive changes in our attitudes and systems. The deeply entrenched system of institutionalized racism upon which this country was founded has produced pernicious racist policies, such as redlining and other discriminatory housing policies that deny mortgages to Black people, overcriminalization of Black youth, disproportionate targeting and killing of unarmed Black men and women by law enforcement, racial segregation, and the lack of equal educational opportunities, among others. It is also this system that produces an unequivocal statistic of a higher rate of COVID-19 infections and deaths in Black communities due to factors such as inadequate access to health care, the financial need to work in risky essential jobs, living in more densely populated areas, and the environmental racism that exposes Black people to pollutants that exacerbate heart and respiratory diseases and compromise immune systems.

This is a system we must dismantle and transform *now*. Expressing words of solidarity from a distance in a safe place is not enough. At API Legal Outreach, we believe that we must actively take an action, however small or big, to stand up for Black people – immediate action can be:

- Registering and Voting in the November and future elections (registertovote.ca.gov)
- Supporting California’s Slavery Reparations Task Force (Assembly Bill 3121)
- Supporting affirmative action (Proposition 16) a powerful tool to remedy a history of past discrimination that has prevented equal access to education and jobs
- Supporting the Black Lives Matter movement by making donations (www.blacklivesmatter.com)
- Challenging our own racial prejudice and anti-Black racism within non-Black communities of color
- Participating in non-violent protests to advance racial justice causes.

As James Baldwin taught us, “not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” The time to face the history of institutional racism against Black people is now. We must work together with our Black and Brown brothers and sisters to pave a path for future generations to create a world in which no more youth of color have to feel fearful of their lives because of their skin color.

Let us remember their names:

Ahmaud Arbery, shot and killed while jogging in Glynn County, Georgia, on February 23, 2020.

Breonna Taylor, shot and killed in her apartment by the plainclothes officers of Louisville Metro Police Department in Kentucky on March 13, 2020

David McAtee, shot and killed by the Kentucky National Guard while protesting the death of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor on June 1, 2020.

Dresjon “Sean” Reed, shot and killed while running from a police officer by the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department officer on May 6, 2020.

George Perry Floyd, killed by a white police officer of the Minneapolis Police Department who kept his knee on Mr. Floyd’s neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds on May 25, 2020

Manuel “Mannie” Eliza Ellis, killed after being repeatedly punched by the Tacoma police officers, Washington, on March 3, 2020.

Michael Brent Charles Ramos, shot and killed by the police officer of the Austin Police Department, Texas, on April 24, 2020.

Oscar Grant, shot and killed by a white police officer, while being unarmed and kned in the head at the Fruitvale BART Station, on January 1, 2009.

and so many more...