

BETHESDA FRIENDS MEETING STANDS WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER

Quakers believe that there is “that of God in everyone.” They have acted in solidarity with the oppressed throughout their history. Today that means standing with the Black Lives Matter movement. At the founding of the United States, enslaved blacks were determined to be just 3/5 of a person. After nearly 250 years of slavery and 100 years of legal segregation, blacks in America are often still not treated as full citizens or even human beings. Those who believe in the inherent value and equality of all lives must bear witness and loudly declare that Black Lives Matter.

Defining Black Lives Matter¹

- #BlackLivesMatter was created in 2012 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi after Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman, was acquitted for his crime, and 17-year old Trayvon was posthumously blamed for his own murder. Rooted in the experiences of Black people in this country who actively resist their de-humanization, #BlackLivesMatter is a call to actively respond to the anti-Black racism that permeates our society. Black Lives Matter goes beyond extrajudicial killings of Black people by police and vigilantes.
- When we say Black Lives Matter, we broaden the conversation around state violence to include all of the ways in which Black people are intentionally left powerless at the hands of the state. And even more, we are talking about all the ways in which Black lives are denied their basic human rights and dignity.
- #BlackLivesMatter is working for a world where Black lives are no longer systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. We affirm their contributions to this society, their humanity, and their resilience in the face of deadly oppression. Black Lives Matter has put their energy and love for Black people into creating a political project and taken the hashtag off the message and taken it into the streets. The call for Black lives to matter is a cry for all peoples to join the effort for all who strive for liberation.

What can you do? Check out these groups for ways to take a stand:

- Montgomery County Civil Rights Coalition: mocoivilrights.wordpress.com
- Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform: www.MA4JR.org
- Black Lives Matter DMV: www.blacklivesmatterdmv.org

Resources to learn more

- *New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander (2010)
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson (2014)
- *Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow: An Organizing Guide* by Daniel Hunter (2015)
- *Understanding Mass Incarceration: A People's Guide to the Key Civil Rights Struggle of Our Time* by James Kilgore (2015)
- *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* by Jim Wallis (2016)
- *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul* by Eddie Glaude (2016)

¹ Taken directly from blacklivesmatter.com

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Local Statistics

- Unarmed Black people died at the hands of the police at a rate 10 times the rate for White persons.²
- Between 2010 and 2014, at least 109 people died in police encounters in Maryland. Sixty-nine percent of those who died in a police encounter (75 people) were Black. Blacks make up 29 percent of Maryland's population. Police officers were criminally charged in only two of the 109 incidents.
- In 2003, African Americans accounted for 68 percent of all drug arrests in Maryland, and 90 percent of those imprisoned for a drug offense, even though studies have found that whites and African-Americans have similar rates of drug use and drug distribution.³
- About one in four Black and African-American students in Montgomery County has felt discrimination at school.⁴

National Statistics⁵

- **Students of color face harsher punishments at school than their white non-Hispanic counterparts.** A 2010 study found that more than 70 percent of students who are “involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement” are Black or Latino. Furthermore, Black students are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students. During the 2011-12 school year, 16 percent of Black K-12 students were suspended, compared with 7 percent of Latino students and 5 percent of white students.
- **Voting restrictions on the formerly incarcerated have disenfranchised millions of voters, particularly African Americans.** Today, approximately 5.9 million people are not able to vote due to felony convictions. While laws vary from state to state—with some allowing for restoration of voting rights—1 in 13 blacks nationwide are disenfranchised due to felony convictions. In Florida, Kentucky, and Virginia, more than one in five black adults are denied the right to vote.
- **People of color are significantly overrepresented in the U.S. prison population, making up more than 60 percent of the people behind bars.** Despite being only 13 percent of the overall U.S. population, 40 percent of those who are incarcerated are black. Latinos represent 16 percent of the overall population but 19 percent of those who are incarcerated. On the other hand, whites make up 64 percent of the overall population but account for only 39 percent of those who are incarcerated.

Bethesda Friends Meeting is standing in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. For more information:

Visit our website at www.bethesdafriends.org

Contact us at info@bethesdafriends.org

Join us for worship on Sunday mornings at 11 am at the Sidwell Friends Lower School campus (found at the corner of Edgemoor Lane and Beverly Lane).

² ACLU Briefing Paper on Deaths in Police Encounters in Maryland, 2010-2014

³ http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/07-02_REP_MDMandatoryMinimums_DP-MD.pdf

⁴ <http://wtop.com/montgomery-county/2015/10/report-black-students-disconnected-school-work>

⁵ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/race/news/2012/03/13/11351/the-top-10-most-startling-facts-about-people-of-color-and-criminal-justice-in-the-united-states>