

[Home](#) > A Demand for Change!

A DEMAND FOR CHANGE!

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Following the civil unrest sparked by the violent death of George Floyd, many states have commenced plans to protect the rights of African Americans and promote equality throughout the nation. However, these proposals are coming off as ingenuine and seem to only serve as a temporary solution while blatantly failing to encompass the actual change that is needed.

George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, was killed by police officer Derek Chauvin after allegedly paying with a counterfeit \$20 bill in a Minneapolis grocery store. When the video of his murder surfaced, it sparked nationwide outrage while pointing out the hypocrisy of the officers who are taking the same lives they are meant to protect. The built-up anger from previous black men and women who unfortunately lost the fight to the racial injustice ingrained in the American system fueled intense nationwide protests. The black men and women who were brutally slain all saying the same phrase, "I can't breathe," invigorated and empowered activism in and outside of the black community as chants of "Black Lives Matter" echoed throughout the streets. The movement quickly gained popularity outside of the United States where global protests that were held in England, France, Ireland, Germany, Netherlands, and other countries joined and voiced the suffering of the black diaspora. The death of George Floyd seemed to ignite the raging fire of justice that had constantly been put out by the harsh winds of white supremacy rampaging throughout the country.

The protests not only spread awareness on the issue, but also pressurized legislators and those in office to start recognizing the problem and finding applicable solutions to it. The first step in doing so was acknowledging that there actually was a problem, which many people have overlooked and just simply ignored for years. The protests highlighted the disparity between the treatment of African Americans and other POC by the police against that of white people who may have committed more grievous crimes than the POC. Once attention was brought to the systematic racism engraved in the government, the next step was to start implementing the positive changes communities of color wished to see. This aspect was where many states failed to fully succeed. Rather than implementing the changes that will make a difference, lawmakers and legislators painted "Black Lives Matter" on streets and sidewalks, thinking that it would appease the black concern. However, the blatant refusal of promoting any positive difference felt like a slap to the face of many African Americans who wanted to see more laws enforced, such as chokehold bans. As Malcolm X stated, "the white man will try to satisfy us with symbolic victories rather than economic equity and real justice," and that was exactly what these cities and states were attempting to do.

Black Lives Matter murals spreading across the nation such as on the streets of Washington D.C., New York, Texas, California, and more are not bringing the racial equity that is desperately needed. Although it is meant to be a form of solidarity, words alone are not going to end the centuries of inequality and injustice African Americans face and continue to face in this country. From these states listed, New York, Texas, and D.C. have passed the Eric Garner Anti-Chokehold Act, named after Eric Garner who, like Floyd, died from a chokehold-like restraint imposed by a police officer. Although this is a step towards progress, New York only recently passed this act and Garner died six years ago in 2014. It should not have taken this long and another black life lost before changing such policies!

George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Ahmaud Arbery. Botham Jean. Tamir Rice. Trayvon Martin. Eric Garner. Philando Castile. Michael Brown. Sandra Bland. Sean Reed. These are just a few of the countless black men and women who were killed by police. In order for this to stop, people need to be held accountable and real change needs to be implemented.
#Saytheirnames #JusticeforBreonnaTaylor

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