



South Central Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends in Arkansas,
Louisiana, Oklahoma & Texas

The Quakers of South Central Yearly Meeting affirm that Black Lives Matter.

The Religious Society of Friends is deeply committed to equality, social justice, and peace. For more than 350 years Spirit has led our work for the abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, civil rights, and justice for those seeking international asylum. SCYM reaffirms our testimonial commitment to the inherent worth of all people, "that of God in everyone".

We are appalled by the disproportionate use of force by the police against Black and Brown people. We mourn and call for justice for the murders of Clinton Allen, Ahmaud Arbery, Sandra Bland, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Trayford Pellerin, Michael Ramos, Alton Sterling, Breonna Taylor, and a multitude of people unnamed here who were victims of police violence and institutional racism. We stand with those who are peacefully protesting the continuing police violence against Black and Brown people in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas, and around our country.

We recognize that this persistent violence rests on institutions and systems of white supremacy that have been dominant since White peoples came to the Americas. For many years, the culture of white supremacy and a military-industrial complex have militarized our police, destroyed neighborhoods and businesses, defunded public education, and made quality health care practically inaccessible for Black and Brown people. The failed "war on drugs" created a privatized multi-billion dollar bail and penal system that has jailed millions of Black and Brown youth for crimes that, when White people perpetrate them, often go lightly punished or not punished at all.

Spirit leads us to urge that our local, state, and national officials and law enforcement officers end the use of lethal and non-lethal weapons by police against peaceful protestors as well as the continuing disproportionate use of violence against Black and Brown people in our communities. **There is an urgent need for the US Congress to pass meaningful police reform legislation to eliminate the violence of our policing system, demilitarize the police, and establish uniform nation-wide standards on the use of force by police in the performance of their duties. We call upon our governmental officials at all levels to act now. If not now, when?**

We recognize dismantling systemic racism is a long-term commitment and ultimately not the responsibility of Black and Brown people. Quakers have a long history of working for racial justice and for reform in our system of law enforcement. We also acknowledge the outcome of this work has had both positive and negative consequences for the communities we intended to help. As Quakers, we commit to continuing our anti-racist work grounded in Spirit through study, prayer and action.

We call on everyone, including ourselves, to end microaggressions against Black and Brown people because they lead to greater indignities and more overt hostilities. We seek a just and equitable society built on the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings reflected in non-discriminatory laws, quality education for all, universal access to healthcare, living wages, legal immigration options and fair treatment of all refugees, and principled foreign policy.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Addendum

Friends approved the following action steps:

- Send the Minute to Monthly Meetings with a request that they take this concern up and report to the Peace and Justice committee by February 2021 regarding their leadings in this matter.
- Send this Minute to local, state and national media for publication, including Quaker media, our website and social media. Send to local, state and national legislators and officials and report back to the Peace and Justice committee.