

Quaker Voice *on Washington Public Policy*

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Statement on Racial Inequity

The murder of George Floyd has set off an earthquake, a tremor powerful enough to rattle the racist foundation of our society. That foundation was built from the heavy stones of slavery and forced labor, brutal violence and terror, crushing economic inequity and the continuing denial of basic human rights to people of color. White people have used laws and policies to hew and place these stones. The racism in our society conflicts with the Quaker testimony of equality. We are working together to dismantle this systemic foundation.

Most white people don't fear that their children will be killed by the police while driving, jogging, sleeping, or standing outside a restaurant. They can watch birds, bicycle and sit in Starbucks without ordering; the police won't be called. Everyone who finds it unconscionable that others are denied these freedoms, join with us to move boldly in a new direction.

Laws build racism into institutions and underpin the racism experienced by people of color. Because those who have had advantages have had unequal voice in making laws, change will be difficult. We will not break down the practices that underpin unbearable inequity for people of color without passing laws resulting from listening to, understanding, and heeding their pain and need for constant vigilance in a potentially hostile world. We pledge to listen to agendas proposed by communities of color to address these concerns.

In upcoming legislative sessions, Quaker Voice will join with many groups to promote legislation that heals the wounds of racism and builds the equitable society we seek. We will continue to work to demilitarize the police and create public safety teams of professionals to respond to emergency calls for crises involving mental health or substance abuse, to reduce incarceration, to create and maintain effective safety nets, to provide quality education and healthcare for all Washingtonians, and to address environmental injustice. Because we have the opportunity to live at this time when the visible and invisible foundations of racism -- once so seemingly unmovable -- are ready to crumble, we have the responsibility to advocate for change that is radical and healing. We look forward to partnering with you to make that change.

Legislation that we can pass here in Washington state won't fix 400 years of racial injustice. However, we should be part of the solution, seizing the moment and lifting up our society to replace this rotten foundation. Black Lives Matter today and always.