

A Message to the JALSA Community

Do Not Stand Idly By

The entire world has been shaken to its core over the past few days. George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Ahmaud Arbery. And so many others. Victims of centuries of systemic racism and structural inequalities coming to a head, inflamed by notions of white supremacy, and ending up with their deaths.

Our hearts are broken by this raw brutality, and the inequitable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and there is anger spilling out into our streets, here in Massachusetts, the country, and the world. And, there is also a powerful cry for justice. An all-consuming passionate demand to make real changes to our laws and our culture so that nobody is deprived of their life or their dignity because of the color of their skin.

To our Black colleagues, in the Jewish community and beyond, we are with you and looking to you for your guidance in how to make sure that what has been there, but revealed with such horror over the past few days, leads us to do better and be better.

There is no mistake -- to fulfill our faith-based obligation -- to not stand idly by -- we must listen and we must act. That is what JALSA does in the face of injustice, and that is what we will continue to do by opposing bigotry, supporting criminal justice reform, standing up for economic justice, fighting voter suppression, advocating for affordable housing, eliminating health care disparities, seeking environmental justice, and preventing gun violence.

Below, you will find some initial suggestions for ways you can learn, partner and act to strive towards making our shared vision a reality - a society in which everyone is valued, and no one is ever held to be inferior based on their race - a society in which people feel protected, not afraid of the people who should be protecting them - a society in which we, together, realize the true meaning of equality and justice.

Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus

Read the Massachusetts Black and Latino Caucus Ten Point Plan, including federal, state, and municipal actionable steps that can be taken to combat systemic racism, police brutality, and various forms of injustice. [CLICK HERE](#) to read the plan.

In addition to the specific pieces of legislation and resolutions mentioned in this Plan, Black and Latino elected leaders at the Tuesday, June 2nd Caucus event also called for support on tackling discrimination in housing, addressing health disparities, eliminating the academic achievement gap, closing the wealth gap, funding mental health and substance abuse services, and supporting investment in minority-owned businesses.

Black Economic Council of Massachusetts and JALSA Solidarity Consortium

BECMA and JALSA have been working together for several months to create a partnership to create new faith-based markets for Black-owned businesses. Many of these businesses have had a difficult time accessing capital and developing business relationships, grounded in a history that goes back to our nation's legacy of slavery and continuing racial discrimination. This initiative will begin with synagogues, and the intention is to open it to other faith-based institutions and individual congregants who are responsible for purchasing in their own companies. If you want to participate, or want more information on this initiative, [CLICK HERE](#).