

June 3, 2020

The recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade are painful reminders of the fundamental racism and violence of this country. We mourn the loss of these lives, the long list of names of people killed at the hands of police, and the many people lost whose names have never been recognized. These incidents are the product of centuries of oppression that have normalized the killing and dehumanization of Black and Brown people in America.

While we mourn the loss of these individual lives, we must also confront the fact that this represents only a fraction of the injustices perpetrated regularly against Black and Brown people. The response by police to the protests of the last week are just one example. We condemn the violence of police, as well as those voices who would focus on property damage rather than the loss of Black lives. And we reject those who would expend their voice in judgment about the nature of the protest instead of joining their voice in solidarity.

Every day at the Institute for Justice and Opportunity, we see the carnage of structural and institutional racism—in education, employment, housing, healthcare, and the criminal legal system. It is all wrong and it must end. We cannot continue with the status quo where Black and Brown lives are not valued. We cannot let the pain of this moment pass and return to business as usual. We are committed to seizing this moment as an opportunity for change.

The Institute for Justice and Opportunity stands with all who seek justice, accountability, and an end to racism. Our mission is to be a champion of institutional, structural, and personal transformation and to open doors and eliminate barriers to success for people who have been involved in the criminal legal system. Yet, we cannot be successful in our mission without confronting racism at all levels. We stand in solidarity with the **#BlackLivesMatter** movement and all who seek to **#EndRacism**. Together, we must and will do better.

In solidarity,
Ann Jacobs
Executive Director, Institute for Justice and Opportunity