

Actions For Homewood Friends to take to Dismantle Systemic Racism, starting in Baltimore

In response to requests for support of the Proposed Minute on Acting Against Systemic Racism, members of Peace & Social Justice Committee have pulled together the following available actions.

There are two lists here. The first list focused on actions of the sort that the Peace Committee may recommend to the Meeting for corporate action. The second names steps widely recommended for individual white people to aid in the inner journey. There is much discussion about how the personal and the in-the-world dimensions of systemic racism affect each other. Surely they do, and dismantling structural racism requires attention to both at one.

Regardless of the Meeting's action on the Minute, perhaps this will be useful to each of us, and us as a faith community, find our way in social action together.

COLLECTIVE ACTION:

Adapted from the list, "103 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice,"

<https://medium.com/equality-includes-you/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234>:

These can be begun as an individual but will have greater societal impact when white Quakers and others act collectively, intentionally, with accountability.

Listen To Learn What Black Americans' Lives Are Like Now, In The 21st Century:

1. Listen without ego and defensiveness to people of color. Truly listen. Don't scroll past articles written by people of color — Read them.
2. Don't be silent about that racist joke. Silence is support.
3. Follow [Patrisse Cullors](#), [Opal Tometi](#), [Alicia Garza](#), [bell hooks](#), [Luvvie Ajayi](#), [Melissa Harris-Perry](#), [Van Jones](#), [Ava DuVernay](#), [thenewjimmcrow](#), [Laverne Cox](#), [DeRay Mckesson](#), [Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II](#), [Ibram X. Kendi](#), and [Killer Mike](#). Follow them with the intention of listening and learning only.
4. Read [Awesomely Luvvie](#), [Blavity](#), [Madame Noir](#), [The Root](#), [The Griot](#), and [Jamelle Bouie's opinion pieces](#) with a desire to learn and understand better the lives of Black Americans.
5. Watch these [videos](#) to hear first-hand accounts of what our Black brothers and sisters live. Then read every-day people's experiences through the hashtag #realizediwasblack. Watch

the [rules](#) Tik Tok user [@skoodupcam](#)'s mother makes him follow just so he comes home each night. Share with others.

7 actions to stop police violence:

1. There are [varied approaches to ending police violence](#). The best thing to do is to follow your local Black Lives Matter chapter or other local Black-led organization to find out the proposed policy and funding changes in your city or town. Donate to your local BLM chapter, sign up for updates, volunteer, and take action when asked.
2. Campaign Zero has [ten evidence-based solutions](#) to address police violence. Contact your city or town government representative(s) and police chief to advocate for these policies.
3. Within the evidence-based solutions in #2, Campaign Zero has a project called 8Can'tWait, with [eight specific policies](#) to be prioritized to end police violence. The website has a fantastic tool wherein you can see which of the policies your city or town have been enacted. Contact your city or town government representative(s) and police chief to advocate for the policies that have not yet been enacted.
4. Find out your city or town's policy on no-knock warrants (the [policy that led to Breonna Taylor's murder](#)). Contact your city or town government representative(s) and police chief to ban no-knock warrants.
5. Write to your state representative and senator to end qualified immunity like [Colorado recently did](#). [Qualified immunity](#) permits government officials performing discretionary functions to be immune from civil suits unless the official violated "clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known." In recent years, qualified immunity has been successfully used to defend the use of excessive or deadly force by police, like [in this case](#).
6. Fund a project facilitated by [LEAP, the Law Enforcement Accountability Project](#), a fund that empowers activists to change the narrative around the police abuse of Black People. Leap is founded by Ava DuVernay [filmmaker of Selma and 13th].
7. [Understand and share what "defund the police" really means](#). It's about a new, smarter approach to public safety, wherein we demilitarize the police and allocate resources into education, social services, and other root causes of crimes. What we're doing now isn't working — There are so many innocent people who have been harassed or killed by the police unjustly, and nearly every Black American has experienced some form of

harassment by the police. Some good resources for this are [this video by BLM](#) , [this Washington Post article](#) and [this Facebook post](#).

Work for Education Equity:

8. If you or a friend is an educator of color, ask what they need and want. If your educator friend is white, buy said friend books that feature POC as protagonists and heroes, no matter the racial make-up of the class. A few good lists are [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). And/or purchase educational toys that feature POC, such as [finger puppets](#), [Black History Flashcards](#), etc for their classroom. Use these items year-round, not just in February. The racial make-up of students doesn't matter — kids of every race need to know American history and be exposed to people from different races, religions, and countries. If the friend is interested, buy them for your pal's classroom. Don't be shy to ask Facebook friends that you haven't actually talked to in ten years.
9. If you or a friend or family member is an educator, watch or share this [video](#) of Neil deGrasse Tyson speaking about his experience as a Black student telling people he wanted to be a scientist and astrophysicist. Tyson's experience reminds me of a Black friend whose high school teachers tried to dissuade her from taking AP classes, because, with the best of intentions, they thought the AP classes would be "too much" for her. Be an educator who supports and encourages, not one who dissuades. Talk to educators you know about being educators who support and encourage, not educators who dissuade.
10. Work on ensuring that Black educators are hired where Black children are being taught. If you want to know more about why and how this makes a difference for Black children, check out [this episode of Malcolm Gladwell's podcast](#).
11. Find out how slavery, the Civil War, and the Jim Crow era are being taught in your local school. Advocate that history is taught correctly and certain parts are not skipped over or barely mentioned. Advocate that many voices be used in the study of history. Is the school teaching about post-Civil War convict leasing, the parent to our current mass incarceration system? Talking about slavery alone, is your high school showing images such as [Gordon's scourged back](#), [a slave ship hold](#), and [an enslaved nurse holding her young master](#)? Are explorers, scientists, politicians, etc who are POC discussed? Are male and female authors who are POC on reading lists? In my mostly white high school, reading books like *Having Our Say*, *To Be a Slave*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was really important. A great starting list of such books is [here](#). Are Japanese internment camps being discussed? Is history explained correctly in history books? As an example of a severe failure to teach the reality of slavery and its ramifications, check out [image 1](#) and [image 2](#) . There are a lot of great resources out there with a little googling, like [PBS's resources for teaching slavery](#), [this POC Online Classroom](#)

[blog](#), [Teaching for Change](#), [The Zinn Project's This Day in History](#), [Teaching Tolerance at the Southern Poverty Law Center](#), and [The National Association for Multicultural Education](#), and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Use Purchasing Power:

13. Donate to anti-white supremacy work such as your local Black Lives Matter Chapter, the [National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls](#), the [NAACP](#), [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), [United Negro College Fund](#), [Black Youth Project 100](#), [Color of Change](#), [The Sentencing Project](#), [Families against Mandatory Minimums](#), [A New Way of Life](#), [Equal Justice Initiative](#), and [Dream Defenders](#). Join some of these list-servs and take action as their emails dictate.

14. Support Black businesses. Find them on [WeBuyBlack](#), [The Black Wallet](#), and [Official Black Wall Street](#). Another great list is [here](#). Etsy features Black-owned businesses [here](#).

15. Bank Black. It doesn't have to be all of your checking or savings. Opening up an account with some money is better than no account at all. You can use the link from #14 (type "banking" in the Category field) or [Blackout](#) to find a bank. At the very least, move some or all of your checking, savings, mortgage, etc out of Wells Fargo as a part of the [divestment movement to protect Standing Rock](#).

16. Get your company to move some or all of its money to Black-owned banks, like [Netflix is doing](#).

17. Don't buy from companies that use prison labor. [UPDATE the list [here](#).] While Whole Foods is on that list, but [pledged to stop using prison labor in 2016](#), they haven't made amends for that abuse. You can't pour gas on a burning building, decide to stop pouring the gas, then walk away like everything is fine. Until Whole Foods pays reparations, they stay on the boycott list.

18. Stand outside of the stores from #17 with a sign that reads "[Company] uses prison labor" even if for 30 mins a few times a month.

There's more →

End racial impacts of legal-criminal justice practices:

19. Read up about mandatory minimum sentences and watch videos about this on Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM's) [website](#). FAMM's website includes work being done at the federal level and state level. Call or write to your state legislators and governor about reducing mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug crimes.

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23. Call or write to your state legislators and governor to support state-wide criminal justice reform including reducing mandatory minimum sentences, reducing sentences for non-violent drug crimes, passing "safety valve" law to allow judges to depart below a mandatory minimum sentence under certain conditions, passing alternatives to incarceration, limit the use of solitary confinement etc. [Study](#) after [study](#) shows that racism fuels racial disparities in imprisonment, and [about 90% of the US prison population are at the state and local level](#).

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24. Call or write to state legislators, federal legislators, and your governor to decriminalize weed. No, not because Black folks use weed more frequently than white folks. Because [Black Americans are arrested for marijuana possession far more frequently than white people](#).

25. Call or write to state legislators to require racial impact statements be required for all criminal justice bills. Most states already require fiscal and environmental impact statements for certain legislation. Racial impact statements evaluate if a bill may create or exacerbate racial disparities should the bill become law. Check out the status of your state's legislation surrounding these statements [here](#). Such a bill was introduced in 2019 in Maryland but not passed. Montgomery County did pass a racial and ethnic impact statement requirement.

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30. Research your local prosecutors. Prosecutors have a lot of power to give fair sentences or Draconian ones, influence a judge's decision to set bail or not, etc. In the past election, a slew of fair-minded prosecutors were elected. We need more.

31. Call or write to state legislators, federal legislators, and your governor to end solitary confinement in excess of 15 days. It is [considered torture by the UN](#), and it is [used more frequently on Black and Hispanic prisoners](#). For more information on solitary, two good overviews can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

32. Watch [13th](#). Better yet, get a group of friends together and watch 13th.

Here are eight ways that an individual can fight racism in their community.¹

1. Learn to recognize and understand your own privilege. One of the first steps to eliminating racial discrimination is learning to recognize and understand your own privilege. Racial privilege plays out across social, political, economic, and cultural environments. [Checking your privilege](#) and using your privilege to dismantle systemic racism are two ways to begin this complex process.

However, race is only one aspect of privilege. Religion, gender, sexuality, ability-status, socio-economic status, language, and citizenship status can all affect your level of privilege. Using the privileges that you have to collectively empower others requires first being aware of those privileges and acknowledging their implications. [Learn more about five types of privilege.](#)

2. Examine your own biases, the stories about “others” you picked up from family and media, and consider where they may have originated. What messages did you receive as a kid about people who are different from you? What was the racial and/or ethnic make-up of your neighborhood, school, or religious community? Why do you think that was the case? These experiences produce and reinforce bias, stereotypes, and prejudice, which can lead to discrimination. Examining our own biases can help us work to ensure equality for all. We encourage you to check out the PBS documentary, [Race: The Power of Illusion](#), which tackles the social construct of race in the United States.

3. Validate the experiences and feelings of people of color, and notice your defensiveness. Another way to address bias and recognize privilege is to support the experiences of other people and engage in tough conversations about race and injustice. We cannot stay on the sidelines to discuss oppression and discrimination for fear of “getting it wrong,” so Take action by learning about the ways that racism continues to affect our society. For example, by watching documentaries, such as [13th](#), or reading books, such as [Americanah](#) or [Hidden Figures](#).* [As advocates, we learn about domestic violence by listening to survivors of domestic violence.] Similarly, the best way to understand racial injustice is by listening to people of color.

4. Challenge the “colorblind” ideology. It is a pervasive myth that we live in a “post-racial” society where people “don’t see color.” Perpetuating a “colorblind” ideology [actually contributes to racism](#). When Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. described his hope for living in a colorblind world, he did not mean that we should ignore race. It is impossible to eliminate racism without first acknowledging race. Being “colorblind” ignores a significant part of a person’s identity and dismisses the real injustices that many people face as a result of race. We must see color in order to work together for equity and equality.

¹ adapted from the National Network to End Domestic Violence, NNEDV. org

5. Call “in” racist “jokes” or statements. [Let people know that racist comments are not okay](#). If you are not comfortable or do not feel safe being confrontational, try to break down their thought process and ask questions. Aim to do this with curiosity and honest upset or confusion. For example, *“That joke doesn’t make sense to me, could you explain it?”* Or *“You may be kidding, but this is what it means when you say that type of thing.”* Do not be afraid to engage in conversations with loved ones, coworkers, and friends. [Microaggressions](#), which can appear in the form of racist jokes or statements, perpetuate and normalize biases and prejudices. Remember that not saying anything – or laughing along – implies that you agree.

6. Find out how your workplace, school or retirement portfolio works to expand opportunities for people of color. Systemic racism means that there are [barriers – including wealth disparities, criminal justice bias, and education and housing discrimination](#) – that stack the deck against people of color in the workplace or at school. For example, [the African American Policy Forum \(AAPF\) reported](#) that in 2014, a 12-year-old girl faced criminal charges, in addition to expulsion from school, for writing “hi” on a locker room wall. Their campaign, [#BlackGirlsMatter](#), addresses the issues of overpoliced and under-protected Black girls within the education system. It is important for companies and schools to address these issues and promote a culture of equity.

7. Be thoughtful with your finances. Make a commitment to reparation and justice work for long-term systemic change, not just charity to alleviate short-term need. Know the practices of companies that you invest in and the charities that you donate to. Make the effort to shop at small, local businesses and give your money back to the people living in the community, who will spend it locally. Donate to anti-white-supremacy work. Support Black businesses. Find them on [WeBuyBlack](#), [The Black Wallet](#), and [Official Black Wall Street](#). Another great list is [here](#). Etsy features Black-owned businesses [here](#). If there are Black children/teens in your life, contribute to their college savings plans. You can also contribute to an HBCU or to the [UNCF](#). Consider making HBCUs and the American Indian College Fund beneficiaries through your will or living trusts.

8. Be a real friend. Seek out a diverse group of friends for you. Practice real friendship and intimacy by listening when POC talk about their experiences and their perspectives. They’re speaking about their pain. Seek out a diverse group of friends for your kids.

9. Raise expectations, demand fairness and respect for Black people as you would for yourself. More and more stories of Black folks encountering racism are being documented and shared through social media — whether it’s at a hotel, with the police, in a coffee shop, at a school, etc. When you see such a post, call the organization, company, or institution involved to tell them how upset you are. Then share the post along with the institution’s contact information, spreading the word about what happened and encouraging others to contact the institution as

well. Whether the company initiated the event or failed to protect a POC during an onslaught by a third party, they need to hear from us.