

How to Make this Moment the Turning Point for Real Change.



Barack Obama outlines his vision.

On June 1, 2020, Barack Obama made a statement regarding his view on how we can make a real sustained change.

He states: "So the bottom line is this, if we want to bring about real change, then the choice isn't between protest and politics. We have to do both. We have to mobilize to raise awareness, and we have to organize and cast our ballots to make sure that we elect candidates who will act on reform."

President Obama leads up to his "bottom line" by first recognizing that the overwhelming majority of the protestors are not violent and should not be condemned. He further states that we must "not excuse violence, or rationalize it, or participate in it. *If we want our criminal justice system, and American society at large, to operate on a higher ethical code, then we have to model that code ourselves.*"

Obama's second point is that protest serve a valid function of increasing public awareness and spotlight injustice. But he points out that "aspirations have to be translated into specific laws and institutional practices—and in a democracy, that only happens when we elect government officials who are responsible to our demands."

President Obama makes an additional point frequently overlooked. While it is important who we elect at the national level - including the President, the Senate and our House representatives.

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White Privilege to Me

People banter about the term "white privilege" quite a bit. Without diving into the controversy of the term, allow me to say what it means to me. I will focus primarily on what "white privilege" means in terms of staying alive.

You will need to bear with me because I have taken to heart the oft seen protest sign "Say their names."

What does white privilege mean to me?

My son, Chris, could walk home carrying Skittles. **Trayvon Martin could not.**

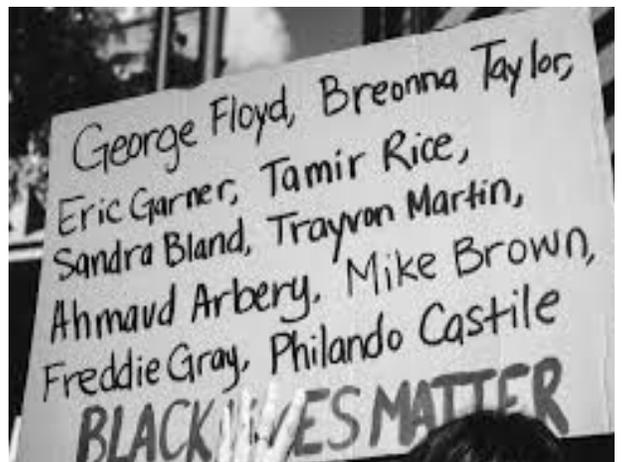
A white 12 year-old can play with a toy gun. **Tamir Rice could not. Killed in seconds by police.**

I can get my wallet out. **Amadou Diallo did and 41 police bullets later he was dead.**

I can go for a jog. **Ahmaud Arbery tried and he was hunted down and killed.**

I can travel home after a party. **Oscar Grant could not. Police put his face on the ground and shot him in the back.**

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Cowboys for Trump Head Scratcher?

This is another of those, you have to be kidding accounts!

In New Mexico there is a County Commissioner who is seen on a video from May 17 saying, “I’ve come to a place where I’ve come to a conclusion where the only good Democrat is a dead Democrat.”

Shortly after, Couy Griffin, head of “Cowboys for Trump,” tried to walk the statement back by saying he didn’t mean it in a “physical sense.” Trump re Tweeted the video with a caption that said “Thank you Cowboys. See you in New Mexico.”

Griffin’s attempts to walk back his statement did not work with the Republican Party of New Mexico which stated, “The Republican Party of New Mexico wants to state for the record that any statements, whether in jest or serious about harming another individual are just plain wrong.”

It seems Griffin was not out of character with his “dead Democrats” statement. Regarding Virginia protest about increased gun controls, Griffin said “Virginia I’m coming your way. And I got a rope on my saddle if you think we may need it?” Finally, a statement to Trump on Twitter, “There will come a day when politics won’t be able to hide treasonous acts. Hang em high Mr. President.”

There’s more but the above seems sufficient to point out that there are some people who are, shall I say, beyond one’s ability to even scratch your head about.

Sources: Santa Fe, New Mexican; Daily Mail.com; Albuquerque Journal.

What Social Justice Group to Support? Some Thoughts

Recent events and most people’s desire to see actions which will lead to justice and equality, have created a desire to contribute to organizations which will help achieve those goals. This article is intended to provide some guidelines and suggestions about giving.

First, are you looking to make a tax-deductible contribution? There are two primary charitable organizations 501 (c)(3) and 501(c)(4). The simple distinction between the two is whether the organization takes political positions. A 501 (c)(3) cannot actively participate in political activities, a 501 (c)(4) is permitted to take political actions. Contributions to (3) organizations are tax-deductible, (4)s are not. In many cases a (c)(4) organization will have a “Foundation,” an affiliated group that conforms to the (c)(3) tax requirements.

Second, check the mission and goals of the organization to make sure they are actually doing things you want to see happen. This is best accomplished by looking up the organization through a search engine.

Third, I recommend you use an organization like Charity Navigator (do a search) to check the record of the organization you want to support.

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Reflections on a violent history

I join with all of those who are expressing the outrage, disgust and frustration over the present situation. I was born in the 40s. I shared with those of my generation the reality of the tragedies and the hope of the triumphs for race relations in our nation. What a travesty, the triumphs are rapidly being undone and the tragedies just keep mounting. How terrible it is to have watched, 57 years ago JFK and Medgar Evers assassinations, 55 years ago Malcolm X assassination 52 years ago MLK Jr. and RFK and countless others. Now I have watched Floyd, Garner, Brown, McDonald, Gray, Rice and countless others killed by the very institutions who are charged to protect them. This simply cannot stand. I want to experience hope for our people, our planet, my grandchildren and their children.

I repeat the words of a friend who tragically, has to teach her young son how to keep alive in the treacherous society he finds himself in.

"Racial justice is everyone's responsibility and as long as I have breath I will continue to advocate and speak for the unheard and the voiceless individuals in our society. I have no choice!" Humanity has no choice. Let's get on with it!

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if we are to achieve the kind of reforms and change we need to see, we must also focus our efforts on electing the local and county officials who make the decisions about how the actions of institutions they control, police, prosecutions, elections, and more are conducted.

Local reforms should be tailored to the unique needs of each community. They should be developed and made available to the public to ensure that police and other agencies are controlled by the written laws and regulations, rather than the views of the political leadership at any particular time

Obama concludes, "watching the heightened activism of young people in recent weeks, of every race and every station, makes me hopeful. If going forward, we can channel our justifiable anger into peaceful, sustained and effective action, then this moment can be a real turning point in our nation's long journey to live up to our highest ideals."

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I can sleep in my bed. **Breanna Taylor could not. Killed by police seeking a suspect already in custody at the wrong address.**

If I crash my car, I can go to a nearby house for help. **Jonathan Ferrell could not. Killed by responding police. I feel certain, I could tell police I have a legal gun. Philando Castile could not, shot five times seconds after telling police he had a legal gun.**

If I were not white, my chances of being killed by police increase 2 ½ times.

Let me say one more thing about white privilege. I have the right to remain ignorant of the institutional racism and inequities in our society. I choose not to.

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I have a few recommendations related to support for organizations I have found to be very effective in civil rights and social justice issues. You should definitely apply the recommendations above if you were to consider these organizations.

1. Southern Poverty Law Center. Highly rated advocacy group fighting against hate.
2. ACLU. Very well-known advocacy group.
3. Freedom From Religion Foundation ffrf. Highly rated (top 10) organization advocating separation of church and state
4. Sierra Club. Very active in environmental and social justice issues.
Disclosure: I am on the NJ State Board, Union County Chair and a member of the Environmental & Social Justice Committee.
5. NAACP. Can't get much better known.

Truth Matters NP is edited by Allen Swanson and Brian Haas. All articles are written by Allen Swanson unless otherwise indicated. Questions, comments or suggestions should be directed to truthmattersnp@gmail.com. More information may be found at <https://lookingleftnj.com>

