

Systemic Racism

And

Required Reform

Authored By: Ulysses N. Jaen, J.D., M.L.I.S., M.P.A.

& Connor R. Martin, J.D. Candidate 2021

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The Issue:

The United States of America has been plagued by the same series of problems and has repeated the same oppressive cycle regarding treatment of members of minority communities since the American Civil Rights movement of the 1960's. The issue that has been overlooked, brushed aside, and outright ignored is the continuance of systemic racism on behalf of our nation's police forces and within our criminal justice system. The oppression of minorities, particularly the black community, has been occurring since the days of our Founding Fathers. Indeed, the systematic oppression of blacks was far from over after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In fact, such oppression of the black community is arguably as prevalent today as it was in the times prior to the passage of the Proclamation.

While it is largely undeniable that systemic racism takes form in nearly every facet of life including; banking, housing, the education system, corporate growth opportunities, law enforcement, and unequal treatment in the nation's judicial system, the following analysis will focus primarily on the topics of disparate treatment of the impoverished and minority community members by law enforcement and the nation's judicial system. Readers will learn about racial injustices precipitated by law enforcement throughout the last five decades and how in today's America those injustices have remained the same or increased in frequency and severity. Though it will be argued that not all hope is lost. It will be shown how advances in technology provide a unique opportunity to combat racial injustices. A series of proposed actions by both law enforcement and law makers can provide the change we desire and deserve. Included in the proposed changes to law enforcement agency practices are: the institution of federal guidelines related to hiring and training practices of new law enforcement personnel, periodic mental health evaluations, high stress situational training, sensitivity and racial difference training, community outreach programs, training in professionalism and legal issues, the use of body and dash cameras, reassignment of officers, and anonymous reporting of law enforcement misconduct. The proposed alterations to our nation's criminal justice system will include: the removal of built in barriers based on poverty, the decriminalization of minor offenses based on failure to pay fines, probation and parole reform, and changes to the application of "Stand Your Ground" law in states that have such laws. Finally, the article will cover how it is necessary to change the minds of the non-

aggrieved that do not support the message of change by educating them on the issues they do not face. Alternatively, for the non-aggrieved that do support the message, how to best get involved in the progressive movement and how to broach difficult racial issues the article will address with those of another race.

Periodically throughout our nation's history, particularly after the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's, events have occurred that brought this issue into the forefront of America culture. Though even in contemporary America, we as a nation fail to provide any concrete resolve to the underlying issue that begin this process anew decade after decade. The same general cycle repeats time and time again. The oppression of minority groups occurs, often in the form of violence against their members by law enforcement, the nation takes note of the injustice, civil unrest erupts in various levels of degree, and after the news coverage ends, we tend to forget about the issue. Unfortunately, this is not a one-off occurrence and is currently back at the forefront of American culture and in the media with the tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. What America must call for this time is different than what she has called for before. It is time that substantial reform in the form of legislation and federally instituted guidelines takes shape. Only with tangible, concrete reform will we as a nation be able to break the wheel of systemic racism and oppression of minority groups within our society.

In order to truly understand the path a nation must take to effectuate the change it desires; it must look into the past to see where the problems began. Many argue that the systemic racism that plagues America and sister nations alike dates back to the founding of our country. While they are correct in asserting such a point, such an argument is potentially too broad. To determine how best to move forward it is most constructive to look at contemporary America and how the last roughly seventy years have shaped where we stand today, divided, scared and uncertain. The American Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s is regarded by some as a rebirth of a nation once divided. During this time the nation saw the landmark 1954 Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* that abolished segregated educational facilities and forced integration of whites and blacks in the classroom. The decision was a monumental step forward for the educational opportunities of black Americans. The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, required equal

access to public places and employment, enforced desegregation of schools and provided the right to vote to blacks, is regarded as the premier legislative step toward equality. CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/civil-rights-act.htm#:~:text=The%20Civil%20Rights%20Act%20of,and%20the%20right%20to%20vote.> ()

However, while the victories of the Civil Rights movement brought the nation closer to the unity we all desire, they were not enough to quell the underlying ideological problems that continue to bring about the divide we see today. The nation remains plagued by the cycle of systemic racism, though through changes in our nation's law enforcement and criminal justice system we have the unique opportunity to bring all under the umbrella of equality.

Racially motivated protests and calls for reform have been an all too common experience in the last seventy years. Unfortunately, such happenings are so numerous that not every injustice and subsequent protest can adequately be explored and dissected in a single article. In light of such constraints three key instances where law enforcement used what is generally considered to be excessive force that span four decades will be briefly discussed to exemplify the continuous nature of the problem. All three of the discussed topics are known by most throughout the country and regarded as egregious acts by law enforcement against minority communities or specific members of minority communities. They include; MOVE in the 1970s-1980s, the beating (and acquittal of officers) of Rodney King in Los Angeles in the 1990s and the tragic death of Freddie Gray while in police custody in Baltimore, Maryland in 2015.

MOVE:

MOVE, short for *The Movement*, was an idealistic group that promoted social justice for the impoverished. While many of the known members were black, the organization accepted members of all races that shared their beliefs. The group emphasized the need to distance themselves from many manmade materials and opposed the use of electricity as well as many other modern comforts. In 1974, MOVE set their protest goals towards ending police brutality in their community. The protests often took angry sentiments and were known for their use of profanity and later, violence. By 1976, the group began to clash violently with the local police in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The tensions between MOVE and law enforcement grew

exponentially into the 1980s. On May 13, 1985, tensions reached the ultimate point of escalation when the city of Philadelphia, authorized by Mayor Wilson Goode, dropped a bomb from a helicopter onto the MOVE headquarters, a residential home in West Philadelphia. The blast claimed the lives of 11 people inside the home including five children and destroyed 53 homes in the surrounding area. The actions of those who authorized and executed the bombing of the residence never resulted in criminal charges and Mayor Goode was reelected during the following mayoral race cycle. <https://billypenn.com/2020/05/11/move-101-why-30-years-ago-philadelphia-dropped-a-bomb-on-itself/>

Rodney King:

In March 1991, then paroled, Rodney King led Los Angeles police on a high-speed chase through the city when officers attempted to stop him based on the suspicion that King was driving under the influence. When King's vehicle was brought to a stop, officers ordered him from the vehicle and began a savage assault on him which lasted for roughly fifteen minutes. During the beating over a dozen officers surrounded the scene and watched as several officers used batons against and stomped him as he laid in the roadway. While King did survive the hellacious beating, King suffered, among other injuries, permanent brain damage, skull fractures and broken teeth. Footage of the beating was taken by a bystander with a video camera and eventually led to four of the officers being criminally charged with excessive use of force for their actions in assaulting King. Of the four officers charged, three of the officers were white. Over a year later, in April of 1992, the four officers were acquitted of all charges by a jury of 12 that did not contain a single black juror. The news of the officer's acquittals shocked the country and within hours sparked massive protests that quickly became riots in cities all across the nation. During these riots, not only did participants destroy personal property and partake in looting, many motorists on public roadways in Los Angeles County were pulled from their vehicles and viciously beaten by riot participants.

However, King's beating and the officer's acquittals were not the sole cause of the social unrest in the greater Los Angeles area at the time. Nearly contemporaneously with the acquittal of the officers was the gross miscarriage of justice associated with the shooting death of fifteen-year-

old black child Latasha Harlins. Harlins was shot and killed by a Korean bodega owner in southern Los Angeles because the bodega owner assumed Latasha was attempting to steal a carton of orange juice. In truth, Latasha Harlins was found to have been holding several dollars in cash that she planned to use to pay for the orange juice she was assumed to have been stealing. Instead of being convicted of a form of murder or manslaughter, the bodega owner was placed on probation and issued a five hundred dollar fine. These two gross miscarriages of justice associated with great harm to members of the black community were, once again, the result of systemic racism. The lack of adequate justice being achieved in effective prosecution and punishment of those who inflicted the injury to King and death of Harlins, while shocking, was unfortunately not uncommon or the last the country would see. <https://www.npr.org/2017/04/26/524744989/when-la-erupted-in-anger-a-look-back-at-the-rodney-king-riots> ()

Freddie Gray:

Just before 9:00am on April 12, 2015, a 25-year-old black man named Freddie Gray was standing on a street corner with another black man in Baltimore, Maryland's Western police district. Gray made eye contact with a uniformed officer who was on bicycle patrol and ran in the opposite direction. The officer, Lieutenant Brian Rice, pursued Gray and radioed that he was in pursuit of a suspect. Two additional officers both on bicycle patrol in the area, joined in the pursuit. Gray surrendered to the officers after one officer produced a taser and threatened its use. The three officers then patted Gray down and discovered what they believed to be an illegal knife in the waistband of his pants. It was later determined that the knife found on his person was not illegal in the state of Maryland. Gray was subsequently cuffed, arrested and placed into a patrol wagon, driven by another officer, for transport to the central booking detention facility.

While seated in the patrol wagon Gray was handcuffed, but not secured with a seatbelt, allowing his body to be tossed around the back of the patrol wagon. During this time he was unable to use his hands to brace himself from impacting its walls. The wagon was driven away from the location of the arrest as a crowd of civilians began to gather. The officers stopped the wagon to put leg shackles on Gray. While the wagon was stopped the three officers who arrested Gray assisted with placing shackles on his legs and taking him back into the wagon while one officer

pulled his shoulders and another lifted his legs, as it is alleged that Grey refused to walk on his own. While inside the wagon Gray was placed on a bench on his stomach with his head facing toward the front of the wagon and his hands remaining cuffed behind his back. It was later determined by experts that while the wagon drove from the location where officers applied the leg shackles to Gray toward the location where Gray was to be processed, Gray received a fatal neck and spinal cord injury. Between the time when Gray was shackled at the wagon's second stop and when the wagon reached the central bookings facility, the wagon made three additional stops. During this time Gray is alleged to have pled for help and medical attention associated with his difficulty breathing. When the wagon finally arrived at the central booking facility (stop 6) nearly 40 minutes after Gray's first interaction with police, Gray was found unresponsive and unconscious. One officer noted that his eyes were closed, and he was not breathing. Gray was then taken by paramedics to a local hospital where he lay in a coma for several days and underwent multiple surgeries. On April 19, 2015 Gray was pronounced dead by medical personnel. The cause of death was complications related to the head and neck injuries sustained between the wagon's second and sixth stops.

On May 1, 2015, the Baltimore State's Attorney's Office charged Officers Caesar Goodson, William Porter, Garrett Miller, and Edward Nero; Lieutenant Brian Rice; and Sergeant Alicia White with criminal offenses related to the tragic death of Freddie Gray. The charges included reckless endangerment, involuntary manslaughter, and second-degree depraved heart murder. Three of the six charged law enforcement personnel went to trial. In all three cases, the officers were acquitted of their respective charges. The remaining three officers had the charges against them dropped by Baltimore's State's Attorney's Office. [https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-officials-decline-prosecution-death-freddie-gray \(\)](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/federal-officials-decline-prosecution-death-freddie-gray)

Similar to the MOVE clash with law enforcement in Philadelphia in the 1970's and 1980's, and when Rodney King was savagely beaten by law enforcement in the 1990's, Freddie Gray's death, more specifically the acquittal of the officers that were involved in effectuating his death, sparked national outrage. In Baltimore, Maryland protestors took to the streets in the days following the announcement of Gray's death. What could be described as full-scale riots began on April 27, 2015, shortly after the conclusion of Freddie Gray's funeral. During the first night of the

riots in Baltimore, multiple officers suffered injuries as they clashed with civilians. Fires ravaged the city that night and nearly one third of the pharmacies in the city were looted. The looting of the pharmacies not only resulted in severe property damage, but also led to an extreme influx of powerful prescription opioids being sold on the city streets in the following weeks. The protests continued throughout the following days, often becoming riots after nightfall. Only after the announcement of formal charges by the Baltimore SAO did demonstrations cease in the city. <https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-riots-three-years-later-20180426-story.html> ()

As a result of the lack of effective reform in our nations police departments, and little to no relevant legislation being passed, we find ourselves facing the same issues just five years later. It is abundantly clear that our nation has not learned from the injustices of the past decades and has instituted little change directed at addressing the systemic issues that led to such injustices. In order to address injustices of the past and present associated with the oppression of minority communities, our nation must take concrete steps in policy reform and pass legislation to ensure that we are moving past the sins of the previous atrocities. Reform policies within law enforcement agencies must come with mandatory benchmarks and periodic checks from independent review boards so that we may avoid simply bandaging old wounds until they inevitably reopen. Instead, we must treat the underlying causes of such wounds so that they will not continue to be addressed only when the issue comes to the forefront of our news outlets and into the minds of the unaggrieved.

Cyclical Nature of Systemic Racism and Technology:

The underlying issues and governmental responses to those issues have not changed throughout the time period between the American Civil Rights movement and today. The wheel continues to spin at arguably an even greater speed today. This is in part due to the rapid transmission of information made possible by the evolution of technology. The central gear of this continuous wheel, if you will, is the first encounter with law enforcement. Then comes the unequal treatment handed down by the justice system to the impoverished and minority communities. All

of which occurs while non-minority community members and law enforcement receive substantially unequal treatment during law enforcement encounters and judicial proceedings.

Today we have the unique opportunity to break the cycle of systematic racism in a way that was never possible before in our nation's history. The public now has the ability to read and view situations where minority and impoverished individuals receive unequal treatment at the hands of law enforcement and our nation's courts as they develop; live in the palms of their hands. This access is made possible by the advances in technology that allow for the rapid transmission of stories and videos directly to the smartphones that sit within feet of many Americans at all times. As stories and news reports are read and videos are watched, they are shared at a rapid rate through file sharing and social media platforms. In the context of abolition of systemic racism and racially based injustices, immediate access to news is a beneficial development that can lead to the change many of us seek. By allowing millions of people to get a live look at police brutality and acquittals of law enforcement officers charged with abusing their authority through use of force, the issues become impossible to ignore. There is an old adage that "knowledge is power." That power is now in the hands of the American people within seconds of injustices occurring. "Seeing is believing" and seeing without taking action, is simply cowardly. Proper action begins with substantial reform and, if necessary, includes the overhaul of law enforcement agencies in America. Additionally, the nation needs greater uniformity in the treatment of impoverished and minority groups in our criminal justice system.

Demanded Reform in Law Enforcement:

The change that needs to occur in law enforcement policy and performance of duties is incredibly expansive, but every significant change must start somewhere. It would be impossible to cover every credible suggestion pertaining to how law enforcement agencies in this country could improve in a single article. However, some ideals stand out as not only necessary to achieve the desired reform the nation seeks, but also directly implementable within a short period of time. Voters, citizens, taxpayers, and patriots, we must seek national objective guidelines for hiring and training of law enforcement officers nationwide.

Adherence to stringent guidelines would ensure uniformity in the quality of officers on the police force and lead to a general expectation of what anyone, minority or not, could reasonably expect to experience when encountering an officer of the law nationwide. Some aspects of such national guidelines must include mental health evaluations of all current officers and perspective new hires as well as high stress situational training, for all officers. The use of mental health evaluations for officers that have had to use their weapon in the line of duty or have taken the life of an individual in the line of duty are already in use in departments all over the country. However, what should be required are periodic mental health checks, in addition to the aforementioned situations. Officers are everyday people; they go home at the end of their day and have personal lives that include the same issues that we all have. A bad divorce, estrangement from a child or relative, depression, or even general dissatisfaction with their job are just a few reasons that could lead to improper and dangerous professional decisions. While there is absolutely no shame in having imperfect mental health, we must determine that those charged with the undertaking of protecting the citizens of this country are constantly monitored to avoid poor mental health resulting in public harm. This must be done on a continuous and random basis because many who are going through difficulties in their personal lives will not reach out and seek the help of a trained professional.

High stress situational training is another necessary component of officer training to ensure the public safety is adequately protected. High stress situational training is necessary because many poor choices made by law enforcement officers are not made in the way as the decisions by the officer who took the life of George Floyd. That officer made the wrong decision, plea for help after plea for help, and minute after minute. However, many improper choices made by law enforcement happen in what seems like a blink of an eye when officers choose to use their weapons against an individual without adequate justification. High stress situational training would teach veteran and new members of law enforcement alike how to think of better, safer, alternatives than the use of force in a high stress situation.

Sensitivity and racial differences training are also proposed mandatory additions to officer training programs throughout the country. This type of training is intended to act as a supplement to community outreach programs that require a mandatory minimum number of contact hours per

officer in some of the most impoverished and minority neighborhoods in the community. While it is true that some officers within a department will be members of minority groups, and some officers may have grown up in impoverished areas, many did not. In order for officers to be able to understand the specific needs of some of the most vulnerable members of the community, they must meet those individuals in a positive and continuous context. When the only interactions between officers and members of minority and impoverished communities involve negative consequences such as arrests, one could not reasonably expect a positive relationship to exist. By requiring each officer employed in a given department to satisfy a minimum number of community outreach hours, those relationships and understanding of one another's goals will inevitably improve.

Training focused on professionalism and legal issues would serve officer and community relations in a positive way. Again, while many officers conduct themselves in a professional manner and have a command of the necessary legal issues, many, especially rookie officers, may not. Professionalism is a necessary skill to exhibit in every profession in the work force, why not make it a requirement for those charged with protecting and serving our communities? When officers conduct themselves in a professional manner the public feels more comfortable during encounters with police. Professionalism inspires trust and, in many cases, is followed by more respectful behavior on the part of the individual being approached. Considered in a completely separate context; when a waitress comes to a table in a restaurant and is respectful and patient with the guests, they feel more comfortable and confident in the quality of the restaurant. Interactions between law enforcement and the general public are similar to the given example.

Increased training on legal issues would not only serve the police department and the public, but also the prosecuting attorneys seeking justice in the jurisdiction. Of course, no one would reasonably expect law enforcement officers to be as knowledgeable about the intricacies of the law as a practicing attorney, but a more thorough training on the law is required. Many times, a lack of faithful execution of the law at the law enforcement level can lead to inadmissibility of evidence and subsequently the inability to secure the conviction of a dangerous offender. Other times it can lead to a wrongful arrest and, coupled with other poor behavior, even great harm or death to the arrestee. Recall Freddie Gray, the Baltimore man who was arrested for fleeing from

police and possession of what was determined to be an illegal knife. Flight from police, even in a high crime area, is not enough standing alone to establish probable cause for a criminal offense to justify detaining an individual. California v. Hodari D., 499 U.S. 621 (1991) Additionally, it was determined after the arrest and tragic death of Mr. Gray, that the knife found on his person during his detainment was not an illegal knife to possess in the state of Maryland. Mr. Gray should not have been arrested in the first place. Both the detainment and subsequent arrest that ultimately led to his death would have never occurred if the officers involved in the encounter would have been more knowledgeable about the law. Even if Mr. Gray was taken to jail unharmed, he would most likely have been subsequently released without criminal charges. His wrongful arrest at best would have been a severe inconvenience to him and a waste of law enforcement and judicial resources. Instead, it was a national tragedy that sparked outrage in the black community and led to several days of protests, rioting, and property destruction in the streets of Baltimore. All of which could have been avoided if the officers involved had adequate training in basic areas of the law.

Some argue that more complete and longer training might effectively bankrupt many police departments, especially those in smaller cities. While it is true that more complete and longer training periods for officers will cost the departments more than they are currently spending on training, very few departments can creditably argue that the funds do not exist. To say that police departments in small rural areas and those of major cities like Chicago, New York City, and Los Angeles have very different budgets is an undeniable truth. However, it is also a fair argument that many police departments are spending money on excessive military grade weapons and new fleets of high-performance vehicles. Of course, there is a need for certain sects of law enforcement to have special military grade weapons and tools. For example, special weapons and tactics squads, more commonly referred to as SWAT, will inevitably encounter situations where it would be advantageous and necessary to have military grade weapons. The possession and use of these types of weapons and tools is reasonable when used by that small segment of our nations police force. However, those special branches and situations are far from the norm. It is not necessarily true that police departments do not have the room in their respective budgets for better training. It is more accurate to say that far too many would rather spend the available money they have on toys instead of training.

Many law enforcement agencies across the country have instituted policies regarding the use “body cams” and “dash cams.” “Body cams” are small cameras that attach to the chest area of an officer’s outer clothing while they are on duty. They are intended to capture audio and video of the interactions that officers have with the public. Similarly, “dash cams”, are small cameras mounted on the dashboard of an officer’s patrol vehicle that capture interactions with the public, usually during traffic stops. Both body and dash cams are effective ways to track and document the interactions law enforcement officers have with the public while on duty. However, the cameras are often “accidentally turned off” or “malfunctioning” when there is an allegation of misconduct made against an officer. It would be unlikely that an officer would go out on duty without first checking the equipment that may potentially be used while on duty. The question then arises, was it just a coincidence that the camera stop functioning properly at the time of an encounter that ends with an allegation of police misconduct?

An officer would not leave the station for duty with a defective firearm or radio. Nor would an officer forget to load their weapon or turn on their radio equipment. If such equipment was determined to be defective or ill equipped, it would certainly be remedied immediately. Body and dash cams must be held in the same regard as all other equipment that officers are required to carry while on duty. We must call for policies that make leaving for duty with a defective dash or body, cam or having either item turned off while on duty, a disciplinary offense. If officers were told that if they do not have their required video equipment working properly and turned on throughout their shifts, they will be docked half the pay for that shift they would be far more likely to be concerned with the integrity and use of such beneficial and required equipment.

Some States have gone even further than docking shift pay or reprimanding an officer for the intentional disabling of their body cameras. Under current state law in Tennessee, prosecutors can file charges for tampering with evidence against police officers who turn off their body cameras. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/02/27/us/tennessee-body-cam-felony-trnd/index.html> However, some lawmakers in the state desire to make the current law more specific and increase the possible penalty for violation of the law to be a class E felony which is punishable by one to two years in prison. Such desire comes as a result of the shooting death of twenty-five-year-old, Martavious Banks after a high-speed vehicle chase by law enforcement. Three of the officers involved in the

chase and subsequent death of Banks were discovered to be in violation of departmental policies requiring that body cameras to be turned on while on duty. The officers were placed on unpaid suspensions after the incident, though many lawmakers would rather impose a more serious consequence for such violations. *Id.*

Specific violations of body camera use policies are not unique to the state of Tennessee. In June 2018, a man named Samuel Scott was detained, arrested, and processed by Miami Police after he called to report his own vehicle being stolen. Officers claimed that the description of the man whom had stolen the vehicle matched that of Scott and alleged that he filed a false report after getting into a hit and run accident in his own vehicle. All charges against Scott were later dropped by the State Attorney's Office. However, his wallet and cell phone were confiscated during the interaction by Officer Johnathan Guzman and failed to be returned to him after his release, as there was no record of the items being taken or stored in a specific location. Three officers on the scene that day were wearing body cameras at the time but failed to follow departmental policies. The officers turned the cameras off, multiple times, while the interaction was taking place. An internal investigation by the department found that nearly 60 officers within the department had been cited for violating body camera policies within two years. Though it is typical that officers found to be in violation of the policies will receive only "formal counseling", even if they have been cited for violations more than once. Body cameras are undoubtedly a beneficial tool to document law enforcement and civilian encounters and to hold officers accountable, but as stated by Samuel Scott in an interview with NBC 6 News, "but what good is it if they can turn it off themselves?"

Finally, we must put an end to the policy of reassigning irresponsible, unqualified officers to different departments when they are the subject of allegations of misconduct or have been determined to have violated departmental policies. When an officer is reassigned to an often times neighboring police department after they have exhibited improper behavior the can is simply being kicked down the proverbial road. The officer has not suffered much in the way of loss that would reasonably be expected to result in a change in behavior. A bad apple being removed from one basket and placed into another doesn't make the crop as a whole better, it makes the next basket bad. The same logic holds true in the reassignment of problem officers. Instead of reassigning the problem officer to the next department, we must call for their removal from policing. The process

of determining when an officer should be removed from the police force and unable to secure another position in law enforcement must be based on new federal guidelines. These proposed guidelines should include certain enumerated offenses that make an officer unfit for duty per se, as well as a three strikes system for less serious offenses. Many states already employ a system that mandates that three-time felony offenders face life sentences in prison. The proposed strike system would serve the public in the same way by taking multiple time repeat offenders out of their element and off the streets and make the public safer.

In order to ensure that an officer who was found to be unfit for duty either by a single egregious offense or for violating the three-strike policy is not reemployed in another department, we must be able to track such reports and findings. A national data base tracking complaints and determinations of wrong doings must be created and accessible to all hiring entities for law enforcement positions. The national database would ensure that a problem officer has not been able to slip through the cracks of the proposed removal system by applying for a position in another jurisdiction or part of the country. The database could also be widely used by law makers at the state and federal level to determine which acts of police misconduct are among the most frequent in a given area. Being able to easily access such data would make the process of redressing the broken system more efficient and more specifically targeted. Putting an end to the policy of pushing a bad law enforcement officer on to another department cannot be adequately addressed without the creation of a national database.

In addition, many suggested points regarding policy reform in law enforcement have the potential to make relations between the police and the community more positive. They have the potential to help hold the few bad police officers that give the profession a bad name more accountable for their actions. Policy reform can provide more attainable redress for those who suffer injustices based on inappropriate police actions. Though in many cases these numerous benefits can only be achieved if injustices and improper behavior are reported accurately and honestly. Many times, a complaint by a civilian, especially one with a criminal record or poor reputation can be overlooked even when meritorious. To address this built-in obstacle we must incentivize anonymous reporting of police misconduct by other police. Incentivizing reporting of such behavior can be done in two ways. The first is to use financial incentives to entice officers to

report inappropriate police misconduct. It may seem that the use of financial incentives is a bit extreme, though when considering that the department could be financially liable in a civil legal action for the inappropriate actions of one of their officers, the use of financial incentives seems to be money much better spent. Departments should be willing to pay an officer for anonymous reports of grave misconduct by other officers rather than pay large judgments in tort cases that are expensive and create a negative image of the department within the community.

The second way that police departments can incentivize anonymous reporting of officer misconduct by fellow officers is through a vicarious liability approach. Departments have the ability to issue policies that create liability on behalf of officers that knew or should have known of their fellow officers' misconduct. If proven that fellow officers knew or reasonably should have known and did not report the misconduct the knowledgeable officers would be held liable for the actions of the offending officers. If an officer had a choice to either anonymously disclose the bad actions of another officer or risk being fired and lose their pension, far more police misconduct would be reported nationwide. Such incentives must be used to achieve transparency in a tightknit organization like law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies themselves should not be opposed to the use of incentives such as those described because it will help them in identifying offending officers within their departments.

Another obstacle in eradicating or addressing misconduct by police is how complaints are handled and reviewed. It is common for allegations of police misconduct to be investigated internally or by a comparable law enforcement agency. When officers spend many years working side by side bravely to police the community, strong bonds are inevitably formed. Generally, strong bonds between law enforcement members are a good thing. However, in situations such as having officers or police chiefs review complaints of their fellow officers or their own staff, those bonds can get in the way of reaching the truth and obtaining justice for the aggrieved. By allowing fellow officers and police chiefs to review their own allegations of misconduct internally, we cannot expect the complainant to get a fair review of their claim. That is why we must institute independent citizen review boards to hear and review misconduct allegations. Review boards would be established much like juries. They would be comprised of six to twelve members of the community that would be charged with hearing all the facts surrounding allegations of officer

misconduct. A separate entity, either a judge or a standing disciplinary board would impose the proper punishment should an act of misconduct be found by the citizen board. Citizen review boards would hear allegations of misconduct that may not rise to the level of criminal charges, but nevertheless require independent review.

Some argue that the implementation of hiring and officer training guidelines at the federal level would run afoul of the 10th Amendment to the United States Constitution which grants all power not specifically given to Congress to the States. However, there is a credible argument that Congress could institute and require adherence to such guidelines under their Commerce Power. Many minorities may not feel comfortable visiting and would be less willing to travel to states that do not adhere to such guidelines for fear of wrongful treatment, may result in a substantial negative impact on interstate commerce. The United States Supreme Court in *Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc. v. United States* held, “the determinative test of the exercise of power by the Congress under the Commerce Clause is simply whether the activity sought to be regulated is ‘commerce which concerns more States than one’ and has a real and substantial relation to the national interest.” *Heart of Atlanta Motel Inc., v. United States* 379 U.S. 241 (1964) Inability to feel safe and secure whilst traveling certainly acts as a deterrent to travel accommodations and would lead to less visitation and patronage of a particular city. A lack of tourism to any city undoubtedly has a substantial effect on commerce within the state and its border states.

Alternatively, if it were determined to be unconstitutional for Congress to require adherence to federal guidelines concerning hiring and training of police officers under the Commerce Power, Congress would be free to condition the receipt of federal grants to states on adherence to such under the Spending power delegated to Congress by the Constitution. The United States Supreme Court in *South Dakota v. Dole*, held “Incident to spending clause, Congress may attach conditions to receipt of federal funds, and objectives not thought to be within enumerated legislative fields may nevertheless be attained through use of spending power and conditional grant of federal funds.” U.S.C.A. Const. Art. 1, § 8, cl. 1. *S. Dakota v. Dole*, 483 U.S. 203 (1987) The test laid out by the Court to determine if conditioning the grant of federal funds to states is Constitutional is: 1. The exercise of the spending power must be in pursuit of “the general welfare”, 2. Congress must condition the receipt of the funds “unambiguously ... enabling the States to exercise their choice

knowingly, cognizant of the consequences of their participation.” Pennhurst State School and Hospital v. Halderman (1984). 3. Conditions on federal grants might be illegitimate if they are unrelated “to the federal interest in particular national projects or programs.” Massachusetts v. United States (1978). 4. There exists no “independent Constitutional bar to the condition grant of federal funds.” S. Dakota v. Dole, 483 U.S. 203 (1987) Congress conditioning the receipt of federal grants to states that adopted universal hiring and training policies for new and current officers would likely be found to be Constitutional under *South Dakota v. Dole*.

Demanded Reform in the Criminal Justice System:

In addition to the need for major reform policies within law enforcement agencies, the United States faces another hurdle it must pass in order to break the cycle of systemic racism that plagues the nation. There is great need for major reform within our criminal justice system, both at the state and federal level. Currently, there exists many barriers in our criminal justice system that are either designed to oppress impoverished and minority community members or happen to have that effect as they are applied. Again, to name every aspect of the current criminal justice system in America that could use improvement would take much longer than a single piece of writing. There are, however, some aspects that stand out as too easy to redress and too significant to ignore.

The most notable legal issue that requires reform is that of qualified immunity for law enforcement when acting under the color of their position. Currently, officers enjoy qualified immunity protection for acts stemming from their duties as law enforcement officers. Having such immunity from civil prosecution, coupled with what we have seen throughout history, officers are not incentivized to act responsibly in the same way civilians are. We as civilians are able to be held civilly and, in many cases, criminally liable for making unwanted or excessive physical contact with others. Fear of such liability makes civilians think before they act in certain ways and thus makes our society safer. Because officers under qualified immunity do not have that same level of fear of liability, they need not second guess their actions in the same manner. That is why it is imperative that we repeal the doctrine of qualified immunity for law enforcement officers which would force accountability in the same manner as civilians.

The doctrine of qualified immunity is contrary to the American way of reaching redress for those who have suffered at the hands of another. In nearly every other context under the law the aggrieved are provided a source of redress in civil court when claiming to have been wronged. Landlords who refuse to honor lease contracts or tenants, who fail to pay agreed upon rents or fees, can be sued to recoup the losses suffered by the opposing party. Food and beverage providers who sell dangerous products to consumers can be sued for the damage they cause to the health or financial interests of the consumer. Even dog owners are strictly liable for the actions of their animals when the animal has caused bodily or property damage to another. Qualified immunity takes away such an opportunity from those who suffer injustices at the hands of law enforcement and allows law enforcement to operate contrary to the American way of redress.

If officers and the city they work for were to be as civilly liable for tortious acts as civilians are, departments would think more seriously about increasing comprehensive training and procedures for their employees. As previously stated, when there is a consideration made of what would be money better spent, training or tort judgments, the choice becomes clear. Additionally, by removing the cloak of immunity from officers, the community may be more willing to see officers held accountable to the law, which could foster a better relationship in a time of high tensions between law enforcement and the civilian population.

The next aspect of reform in the criminal justice system that must be addressed is the removal of “built in barriers” based on poverty. To give life to a phrase that some may not be familiar with, it is best to use an example when common life occurrences create a cycle of incarceration and poverty that cannot be broken for many impoverished and minority community members. For example, a man, husband and father of three, is the sole breadwinner for his family while his wife stays home to raise their three young children. One day the man loses his job when the company he worked for downsizes and starts layoffs. The next day, the man is out driving to find a new position and realizes there is a brake light out on his vehicle. He cannot afford to get the light fixed until he finds a new position. The following day he is stopped by a law enforcement officer for the broken light and receives a ticket. The ticket eventually goes unpaid due to lack of available funds to fix the light or pay the ticket. Later, based on the failure to pay the ticket and fix the light, his license is suspended. He is stopped again while driving attempting to pursue new employment and is this time taken to jail. Without much of an alternative, the man accepts a term of probation which

he subsequently violates while driving his family to the grocery store the following week. The consequences of violation of probation would likely include jail time and a criminal record which would only serve to make finding new employment even more difficult. This is the punishment for a man whose real obstacle was his lack of available finances, through no fault of his own.

The receipt of a criminal record and incarceration of an individual that finds themselves in a situation similar to the scenario previously described, suffers a disruption of the family unit. When a parental figure goes through the judicial and penal system and suffers the effects of poverty-based oppression, the effects on the family, and eventually society, can be devastating. It is far from just the individual who is going through the justice system who is required to shoulder the burden. Having to deal with a spouse or parental figure suffering at the hands of the criminal justice system causes resentment for the system on behalf of the entire family. The breadth of resentment toward the system and to those who enforce its laws, is most dangerous to children. The children that are thrust into such situations may grow up with a misplaced hatred for the police and the criminal justice system. This can be very dangerous when children who have grown up with resentment become young, impulsive adults. As young adults they can effectuate significant negative consequences on their lives and the lives of others through acts of criminal behavior stemming from their resentment. As such situations arise the cycle continues, their children grow up with a disrupted family unit that often times lacks structure and discipline. Many families are then left without any creditable recourse to break the cycle of generational poverty that led to their current circumstances.

One way to significantly help families that suffer from generational poverty is to reform our criminal justice system. Once an individual, especially a head of household or parental figure, acquires a criminal record the family's chances of breaking generational poverty plummet for yet another generation. We must advocate for an end to criminalizing minor offenses that result from a lack of financial means. This is not to say that one that turns to dealing narcotics because they were not financially stable should be given a pass by the justice system. The minor offenses that are a result of lack of financial means typically take the form of failure to make on time payments for civil infractions or child support, that result in a suspension of driving privileges. The suspension of those privileges can be the start of the cycle of probation and later incarceration for

minor offenses. By removing the built-in barriers based on poverty, we can afford all members of society the chance to achieve financial stability and a stable home life for their families.

Reform in the justice system is required to achieve equality for all members of our society. Reform of how we handle the incarceration, and eventual release, of persons that convicted of serious felony charges must change. The mass incarceration of persons in the United States is an issue that has plagued the country since the 1980s and continues to increase, nearly without reprieve, every year. Peter Wagner and Bernadette Rabuy, *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2017* (Nov. 17, 2019 11:05 AM), http://www.antonioacasella.eu/nume/Wagner_Rabuy_14mar17.pdf. Not only are those incarcerated a burden on the already overcrowded judicial and penal system, they cost taxpayers billions a year to house, feed and lodge. The average cost of incarceration per inmate, per year, ranges from \$31,000 to as high as \$60,000 in some jurisdictions. Eliza Mills, *How Much Does It Cost to Send Someone to Prison*, (Nov. 17, 2019, 10:50 AM) <https://www.marketplace.org/2017/05/19/how-much-does-it-cost-send-someone-prison/> (). The root cause of the mass incarceration issue can be attributed to the mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines, imposed for certain felonies, that began to take effect in the 1980s. An overwhelming number of those who were sentenced under mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines during the 1980s and 1990s were minorities and the current incarcerated population reflects this injustice.

Probation and parole reform in the United States judicial system is a way that our legislature can take steps to combat the issue of mass incarceration and reduce the burden on courts, detention facilities, and taxpayers of this country. As stated, mandatory minimum sentences are largely to blame for the mass incarceration problem in the United States. Many of the state and federal mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines pertain to non-violent drug related crimes established in response to the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s. While there has been a departure from the original mandatory minimum sentencing guidelines in the last two decades for narcotics offenses, the damage has been done in many offender's cases. The statutes and judicial rulings diminishing the length of the mandatory minimums do not apply to those who have already been convicted and sentenced before such changes took place. Based on the grotesque length of sentences, and sheer volume of offenders who received those sentences, many of those offenders

will likely die in confinement. Those sentenced while relatively young will have spent such a significant portion of their lives incarcerated that they may be unable to function properly in society, if released. What is certain to follow is reoffending and the revolving door of release and reincarceration will continue to turn. Continued incarceration of nonviolent narcotics offenders that make up a substantial portion of the inmate population in the United States serves only to continue to overcrowd facilities, produce unsafe work environments for corrections officers, and burden the taxpayer. To combat the issue, states and the Federal Government must put parole programs on the forefront of their agendas. If greater numbers of nonviolent offenders are paroled at an earlier date, as opposed to serving out lengthy sentences, they have a greater chance of being able to find employment and become productive citizens in their communities. In addition, more consistent use of parole lessens the burden on corrections officers and the taxpayer, while keeping some nonviolent criminal offenders from losing most of the productive years of their lives behind bars. Years that could otherwise be spent benefitting society by being a part of the nation's work force.

The regular use of probation and parole will undeniably put a greater stress on those tasked with supervising those who receive probation or are released on parole. However, this problem will work itself out in a broad sense. Those who are not capable of abiding by the rules of society will find themselves violating their conditional freedom programs and face incarceration. Those that do have success in such programs will not only cease to contribute to the existing problem but will aid in solving it. Many will become taxpayers themselves as opposed to being paid for by taxpayers, helping to combat the problem of over incarceration and the financial burden associated with it. Many parolees will aid those who follow in their footsteps that are seeking guidance on how to re-enter society and stay away from behaviors that may cause them to reoffend. These positive changes all begin with legislative action that allows these nonviolent offenders to prove themselves to be a benefit to society instead of being a burden on it. It will be a difficult and arduous process as the corrective legislation is implemented, but the potential benefits far outweigh the negative implications of inaction.

Another controversial legal theory that requires reform is known as "Stand Your Ground law." Generally, the idea behind Stand Your Ground law is well founded and is supported by some

members of all racial demographics. Currently, only a small percentage of U.S. states have Stand Your Ground statutes, but in the ones that do, the murder rate increased by eight percent since enacting the laws. 7 S. Region Black L. Students Ass'n L.J. 95, 107 The reform of this segment of law that must take place is found in its application to minorities. The Stand Your Ground law is intended to establish a true immunity from charges and does not exist as merely an affirmative defense. However, the burden of proof is on the defendant who files a pretrial motion to dismiss a charge pursuant to Stand Your Ground law, relating to justified use of force, to show by a preponderance of the evidence that immunity attaches under the statute. (16 Fla. Jur 2d Criminal Law—Substantive Principles/Offenses § 252) Regardless of one's feelings on the meritorious nature of Stand Your Ground laws it cannot be denied that such statutes have a disparate impact and are applied disproportionately, specifically to members of the black community.

In states that do not have Stand Your Ground laws, whites are 250 percent more likely to be found justified in killing a black person than a white person who kills another white person. In states that do have such laws, whites are 354 percent more likely to be found justified in killing a black person than a white person who kills another white person. 7 S. Region Black L. Students Ass'n L.J. 95, 108 Such startling statistics have led many to wonder, short of repealing the laws altogether, what can be done to cure the disproportionate application of the laws. One way to help reduce the unequal application is by changing which entity is the arbiter of the applicability of the statutes. Under the current system, a trial judge determines whether the defendant asserting immunity, based on Stand Your Ground statutes, have proved such entitlement to immunity based on a preponderance of the evidence standard. While many trial judges are fair, honest officers of the courts, some undoubtably suffer from a degree of racially prejudiced thoughts. If the decision whether or not a defendant is entitled to prosecutorial immunity were instead to be given to a jury of the defendant's peers, than both defendant and victim would likely be given a more objective consideration. Allowing the trial judge to be the sole arbiter of the determination of immunity from prosecution is akin to allowing a trial judge to be judge and jury of a murder case. Alternatively, for equal justice sake, the burden placed on the defendant asserting the immunity must be increased to call for clear and convincing evidence showing entitlement to immunity. By increasing the burden from a showing by the preponderance of evidence, to clear and convincing evidence, more cases would undoubtably go to trial. At trial the defendant would still be able to present their case

and chief, be presumed innocent, and have the state endure the burden of proving culpability beyond a reasonable doubt in order to convict them of the offense(s) charged. Allowing the trial judge to be the sole determining entity of whether or not the victim or the victim's family will have a chance at justice is simply counter to the principles of our criminal justice system. We must enact legislation making Stand Your Ground immunity hearings a matter determined by a jury or, in the least, increase the burden on those asserting such immunity to prove their entitlement by clear and convincing evidence. Only with such reform will we be able to see equal application of the law, a law that currently as applied, is serving to keep the impoverished and minority communities from equal justice.

How the Non-Agrieved Can Support the Mission:

In addition to members of law enforcement agencies, officers of the court, and law makers, there is a segment of the population that must become educated about systemic racial issues if we are to do away with racially based hatred and oppression once and for all. That segment of the population is the unagrieved, the portion of the population that has never had a first-hand negative interaction with law enforcement. Those who have never had the color of their skin work against them. Those who do not truly understand what the methods of protest accomplish or signify, or how the other side lives. Certainly, not all people who are not members of poverty stricken or minorities communities are to blame. In fact, many unagrieved people help the progressive movement by their participation in demonstrations and advocacy for legislation and reform. The unagrieved that inhibit progress are not educated on the issues that they do not face. Not only do they not serve to help remedy the ongoing problem, they move it in the opposite direction.

It is not a systematic racial injustice to support law enforcement, especially if one's family member is current or retired law enforcement personnel. As stated, many law enforcement officers are brave, honorable and hardworking people that help make our communities safer. However, some of the non-agrieved have adopted a symbol that is intended to display their support for law enforcement, but instead that symbol is misinterpreted. The symbol that may have been created with pure intentions is what is commonly referred to as the "Blue Line Flag." The flag is a black and white silhouette of the American flag with a thin blue line situated in place of the first stripe

below the section containing the fifty stars. The symbol is said to represent law enforcement being the last line of defense between a peaceful society and utter chaos. However, many people have interpreted the flag to represent an “us versus them” mentality which is particularly dangerous given the current climate surrounding law enforcement relations. Instead of being interpreted as a showing of support for law enforcement, the flag is being seen as an oppression of the message that police brutality and systemic racism must end. While the flag is undoubtedly less offensive than the patently offensive Confederate flag, it is understandable how the blue line flag is viewed in a similar context. Discontinuing the display of the blue line flag, a symbol that many believe is in opposition to their message of reform, is one way the unaggrieved can sympathize with the aggrieved.

Discontinuing display of the blue line flag is an act by private individuals in our communities to help mend racial tensions and show support for those who suffer at the hands of systemic racism. There are, however, even greater steps that can be taken to yield the same result through the media. The media has a far greater influence on society and how movements are portrayed than do individual citizens. But instead of memorializing the hundreds of peaceful protests that have occurred as a result of the death of George Floyd and others, the media has chosen to focus largely on the destruction caused by the few riots that have occurred following the peaceful protests. No one should argue that the riots that occurred in several major cities in May and June of 2020 were anything but predatory and destructive. However, choosing to focus most of the media coverage on the riots and looting distracts from the real message being communicated by the protestors. The message of reform is censored by portraying largely peaceful protests as dangerous and violent demonstrations ending with arrests, looting, and property damage. The media must instead focus their coverage on the message being communicated by the protestors, not the destruction caused by the rioters and looters. When the media consistently shows video and images of property being destroyed, those who view it become enraged and distracted from the calls for reform. Our media outlets must play a larger role in bringing about the unity of our people instead of encouraging our divide.

In America we must change how one’s race is equated to a level of poverty. Correlating race to financial stability is one of the hallmarks of systemic racism within a society. It is no secret that

one's socioeconomic status affords them certain opportunities and with those opportunities comes a certain lifestyle. It is all too common that some of us are surprised when we see a wealthy minority person or a poor white person, yet we all know that race and affluence have nothing to do with one another. We have these preconceived perceptions about race and affluence because they are what have been taught to us throughout our lives, either by family, or the media. We continue to view other people through such a lens and the cycle continues. Nearly all of us can agree that any connection between race and financial means has to do with equality of opportunity. Members of all races have different opportunities from birth and such opportunities, or lack thereof, are generally what determine one's socioeconomic class as an adult. In order to break the cycle of aligning race with affluence, we must start with our children. By teaching our children that one has nothing to do with the other and leading by example we can eradicate another generation growing up with the incorrect and racist presumptions about who someone is, or what they have, based on the color of their skin.

Alternatively, if we do not invoke real change in race relations, we will experience the continuance of increased rates of hate crimes. The South Poverty Law Center (SPLC) tracks hate groups operating in America. The organization currently has a list of 953 "active hate groups" in America with untold membership among them. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2018/11/08/feature/is-the-southern-poverty-law-center-judging-hate-fairly/> () The SPLC's definition of a hate group is "an organization that based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics," including race, religion, ethnicity and sexual orientation. According to the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance, black citizens are the most likely target of hate crimes in America with over twice the victim rate of the next closest group. Additionally, black churches have historically been victimized by arson. Between January of 1995 and November of 1996, forty-three percent of the arsons that occurred in the south were of black churches. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/162304.pdf> () Even though such statistics date back over a decade, houses of worship for black congregations are still under attack. Notably, on June 17, 2015, twenty-one-year-old Dylann Roof shot and killed nine people inside the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina as they participated in a bible

study group. Roof, though in the eyes of the law an adult, was effectively a misguided child who proudly posted photos of himself with racist material on social media. While it is true that some members of radical organizations are seduced by hate rhetoric and ideals as adults, it is far more common that members grew up in households with family members who held similar beliefs.

After Roof's attack in Charleston, the trend of higher than average commission of hate crimes continued. Some suggest that the upward trend in hate crimes was partly caused by the election of President Donald Trump. While it may have been coincidental, after the election of President Donald Trump in 2016, America saw the second largest spike in hate crimes since 1992, only surpassed by the time immediately surrounding September 11, 2001. Edwards, Griffin Sims and Rushin, Stephen, *The Effect of President Trump's Election on Hate Crimes* (January 14, 2018). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3102652> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3102652> This irregular spike may be related to some of the divisive rhetoric used by Trump during his 2016 campaign. He made off color comments about illegal immigrant Hispanics being the cause of serious crime in America and loosely advocating for ending Muslim immigration into the country. Regardless of one's feelings on Donald Trump as a man and as the President of the United States, such rhetoric tends to cause divide and must be closely monitored by parents to ensure that it is not perceived by children as a call to divide us or foster racism. A recent survey by the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that the number of hate crimes each year in America is roughly 250,000. <https://projects.propublica.org/graphics/hatecrimes> () With racial tensions high, and an ever-increasing population in the United States, we must be more cautious than ever of how children are taught to view race, or we will inevitably see those numbers increase.

The final call to action to the American people is that we must be open and willing to discuss the issues related to systemic racism that plague this nation. Whether one is a minority or not, the conversation must be a back and forth dialogue with both sides willing to listen to understand. It should not come as a surprise that many of the aggrieved and non-aggrieved share the same goals and desires for change. However, there exists a large silent majority that do not know how to effectively ask the necessary questions. That is why former NFL linebacker Emmanuel Acho started a platform where guests on his show can do just that. The program is called, "Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man" and is available for free streaming on

YouTube.com. On the program, Acho's guests are invited to ask all of the questions they may have regarding racially based injustices, social differences, and any other general questions that would help create a better understanding of the issues minorities face in America today. The program has become quite popular with each episode gaining over one million views. Acho affords the opportunity to those invited on his program to ask him questions, but this creates opportunity for only a few. Only questions from invited guests and only answers from him. Although this is a start, there is still more to be done.

We must take Acho's progressive idea and further it by expanding the platform. Instead of single guests asking questions to only him we must broaden the forum to allow access for all. While Emmanuel Acho does a phenomenal job with broaching difficult topics and providing in-depth answers to questions, he does not speak for the entire black race. Nor does he have the time in their day to sit down with hundreds or thousands of people and have a conversation. We must seek to create an expansion of the forum in which anyone could log on at any time and be paired with someone of another race, both parties being free to ask questions. Expanding the platform would allow thousands of questions to be asked to untold numbers of people in a single day. It is one thing to watch progressive conversations taking place, but it is truly another to be involved in one. With the expansion of thoughts and ideas of the common person, we will achieve greater understanding at a much faster rate.

Not all of the non-aggrieved people of this great nation are racists and the numbers of those who are diminish with every generation. For example, one can see how many young millennial white protestors come out to demonstrations protesting racial injustices in all major cities. A quick look to most social media platforms will show that much of the younger generations support groups like Black Lives Matter. However, waiting generations to eradicate a disease like systemic racism has not worked in the past and it will not work now. We have waited and wasted too much time bringing equal members of this society into the equal realm that the majority enjoys. It is time, once and for all, that America answers the cries of her people and bring us all into the fair and equal society that is promised by this great nation.