



**Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research**

Aug. 28, 2020: Second Statement on Justice for Breonna Taylor

Nearly three months ago, we at the University of Louisville Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research issued a statement calling for Justice for Breonna Taylor and the many others like her whose lives continue to be senselessly, wrongly, brutally taken by police violence. Many, many other people and organizations did the same, and have continued to push for racial justice every single day since then.

This week has marked 90 days since massive Black Lives Matter protests began in Louisville and across the world, longer still since Breonna Taylor's brutal murder. Yet still we wait for Justice for Breonna. As Dr. King wrote from the Birmingham Jail in 1963, "wait has almost always meant never. Justice too long delayed is justice denied." That was true 57 years ago and tragically, it is still just as true today.

Mayor Fischer, please act now on what we know you know too—that we as a community and a nation desperately need a true reckoning with white supremacy. Led by those communities most impacted by police violence, it has begun. The question now is, which side are you on?

Regardless of the attorney general's seemingly endless investigation, there are also things Mayor Fischer could do locally right now. This is not a partisan issue, it is a justice issue, and we call on Mayor Fisher to take more dramatic action immediately. Mayor Fisher, please act now to remove all of those officers who secured the warrant and killed Ms. Taylor and to support shifting funds from law enforcement to build up desperately needed community health, employment, housing, and social service programs.

Breonna Taylor is a native daughter, sister, and neighbor to all of us in Louisville Metro. Our hearts remain heavy for the horrific violence and death unjustly rained upon her, and for the harsh, inhumane treatment her boyfriend and mother received that awful night. This statement goes out with deep empathy for and solidarity with Ms. Taylor's grieving family and loved ones—and with admiration for their courage in moving through this travesty with such dignity and persistence.

Every last one of us in Louisville today should be actively grieving and advocating for Breonna Taylor because what happened to her is the very epitome of what is wrong with this nation. After more than 400 years, the United States has yet to demonstrate that Black Lives Matter. Breonna Taylor and this Louisville story are indeed, as national activists have pointed out, "Ground Zero" in the battle for racial justice. All of us here in Metro Louisville are especially charged to keep on insisting on #Justice for Breonna. Every moment of every day, our country and our own local community suffer a spiritual sickness that takes Black lives thoughtlessly and, in doing so, meaningfully diminishes the lives of us all.

Since Breonna's death, acts of state-sanctioned killings of African Americans have mounted—and now most recently, a blatantly unjust attempted murder of another innocent Black man, Jacob Blake, by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin as the victim's three children looked on

in horror. These acts of police brutality are not the result of a few “bad eggs” but of a systemic racism that is deeply embedded into not just the criminal justice system but in all our local and national institutions and psyches.

As a multi-racial but largely white-led institute whose namesake, Anne Braden, was one of the most committed white supporters of racial justice in US history, we again have a specific message to white people in our community. No white person can be neutral on the question of racism. The battle against racism is and always been for the hearts and mind of white people, Anne always said. Now is the time for all to speak out and take specific actions for racial justice in large and small ways, starting with demanding #Justice for Breonna. Keep her name on your lips, her face in your minds. By saying her name in our own families and wherever in our communities we hold influence, we challenge the tacit acceptance of racism and racial violence as norms. We can use our positions of privilege to appeal to elected officials and to amplify the voices of her loved ones and of all the Black and brown people who are denied the very right to breathe.

After the events of the last six months, and as students return en masse to the UofL campus, we in Louisville must open our eyes and keep them open until justice comes for Breonna Taylor and the countless Black lives taken wrongly as hers was, until crimes like these no longer go by unpunished. I appeal to each of you reading this statement to support the young students who are bringing so much heart as they join and lead this movement locally. Let’s each call on elected officials and offer support to Breonna Taylor’s loved ones and advocates in continued calls for the justice she has thus far been denied. Now is the time, Louisville. It is way past time, in fact.

Yours Truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cate Fosl".

Cate Fosl, PhD,  
Director