



## Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research

June 1, 2020: Statement on Breonna Taylor and Other Black Lives Taken

Like many in our community, we at the University of Louisville Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research are full of anguish and outrage about the senseless taking of more Black lives by those who are supposed to protect and serve. The reality of this long pattern of injustice is so painful it is nearly overwhelming, but in recent days thousands have moved into action. We support them in the demand that **Black Lives Matter**.

Racial violence and oppression were embedded in the very foundations of this nation, and unfortunately our country still has never come to terms with that. The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, and now the latest victim of police violence, David McAtee, in the early morning hours of June 1 in West Louisville provide the latest evidence of the searing need for change. But the pattern of anti-Black and -brown violence is much older, dating at least to the slave patrols that became our nation's first police force.

In the sadness of these days, we hold out hope that change will come at last, and we hold the lives lost close to our hearts. For those in the university wishing to provide support or process the trauma of all that is going on, we refer you to excellent resources provided by our partners at the University of Louisville's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office: <https://bit.ly/3cmzx9c>.

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 also have a specific message to white people in our community. Braden's life challenges each of us white Louisvillians not just to feel ashamed or sad or angry but to act, and to do so in accountability to Black leaders.

No white person can be neutral on the question of racism, Anne always said. Each of us should take specific actions for racial justice in large and small ways, starting with the acknowledgment of the depths of the harm caused by white supremacy, harm that can never be fully visible to us. By speaking out in our own families and communities we challenge the tacit acceptance of racism as a norm. We can use our positions of privilege to appeal to elected officials and to amplify the voices of Black and brown people who are denied the very right to breathe. We can sit in the discomfort of our own complicity and do the internal work of addressing our own biases. We can open our eyes and keep them open to witness and condemn the realities of state sanctioned, racialized violence.

We all have a part to play in being part of the solution to this blight on our nation's soul. Now is the time to choose, which side are you on? There is, as Anne Braden said, an "other America."

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