

Dear White America,

Which is more disturbing: African-American men continuing to be shot and killed by law enforcement in our country, or an African-American professional athlete choosing not to stand during the national anthem?

It would seem the latter, and that is why we need to continually say it: Black Lives Matter.

We need to keep saying this because Black lives still do not matter. If they mattered, we would not keep seeing their lives end at the hands of law enforcement – a reality that has existed far longer than cell phone recordings and body cameras have. If Black lives mattered, San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick would not be the most reviled athlete in sports, accused of being anti-police, anti-military, and anti-American; rather, he would be regarded as a man protesting injustice through a peaceful and legal gesture that countless individuals have engaged in for a variety of reasons for decades. If Black lives mattered, white America would be demanding that our fellow white sisters, siblings, and brothers speak up and stand up to those who oppress and kill Black Americans. The systematic oppression and killing of Black Americans is a crime against humanity.

Our feathers are so easily ruffled by a man sitting peacefully during the national anthem, yet we sit idly by every day while Black Americans suffer continued systematic racism and murder. What does this say about us? Do we honestly value a song and a flag more than the human lives that song and flag are supposed to represent? How dare we proclaim that all lives matter when Black lives clearly do not?

We call on our white sisters, siblings, and brothers to have the courage to speak the truth. It may not be popular, but we're not the ones who have to worry about getting pulled over and shot to death while on the way to pick our children up from school. Let's choose to be more outraged by the continued murder of Black lives than the choice of one man to sit on a bench at a football game in an act of patriotism.

Black lives should matter that much to us because Black lives do, in fact, matter.

Sincerely,

The Aspiring White Allies Committee
Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence (OAESV)

Becky Perkins, OAESV (Aspiring White Allies Committee Chair)

Kelly Becker, OAESV

Ann Brandon, OAESV

Julie Broadwell, the Cocoon

Camille Crary, J.D., OAESV

Aaron Eckhardt, Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization (BRAVO)

Tessa Greene, OAESV

Katie Hanna, OAESV

Cynthia Hudnut, Rape Crisis Domestic Violence Safe Haven of Ashland

Kendra Massey, Women Helping Women

Maggie McGuire, OAESV

Jaime Miracle, OAESV

Shannon Morano, OSIP-VP

Cricket Rerko, OAESV

Deb Stoll, YWCA H.O.P.E. Center