



OAESV's Statement in solidarity with community members peacefully protesting the recent deaths of Black individuals and police violence

June 1, 2020

Throughout the weekend, thousands of people gathered across the state in large and small cities to peacefully protest multiple deaths of Black individuals to police violence. This includes, Tony McDade, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many more. There are reports that during protests in major cities such as Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland and many more, peaceful protestors were pepper sprayed inches from their faces, hit with concussion grenades and wooden bullets fired from guns, and more. While the response from police varied city to city, the overall response from police was tremendously different from the recent statehouse demonstrations from groups with white supremacist messaging and also with messaging around requirements related to COVID-19. This disparity in use of police response and intimidation tactics is glaring, unacceptable, and demonstrates deeply systemic racism against Black people and other people of color.

Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence recognizes that systems of violence are interconnected and in order to end sexual violence, state-sanctioned violence must too end. Our staff stands in solidarity with protesters this weekend. We are in this with you and see the value of this work. OAESV calls on our partner organizations, local government officials, and Governor DeWine to not only condemn anti-Black violence committed against peaceful protesters by police this weekend in their cities, but to also take steps to address police violence at large throughout the state. This is not a one-city issue but rather a nationwide crisis in need of emergent, sustained action.

We need our staff, partners, survivors, and communities to feel safe. For that to happen, we must continue to call out violence in all forms.

We continue to ask our Ohio communities to show up in all the ways that you can to work against racism. And we echo these words from the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence: *"We acknowledge that white people in the anti-sexual violence movement have a long way to go to become strong allies for people of color. We believe that white supremacists are emboldened by their apologists in the highest levels of our government and that leadership matters. We call on all white people to strongly engage in ongoing anti-racist efforts, have difficult and necessary conversations, acknowledge white supremacist culture, and speak up."*

The time is now.

Additional Calls to Action—please leave links in the comments for officials, bail funds, and grassroots organizations in your area of Ohio:

- Call your local officials and ask them to drop charges against peaceful protesters in your area and condemn anti-Black racism.



- Support peaceful protesters in your area by donating to freedom funds to bail people out.
- Encourage donations to grassroots racial justice organizations in your area who are working towards liberation of Black communities through direct action and organizing.

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Virtual and telephone interviews available upon request. Email Communications@oaesv.org.

As Ohio's statewide coalition, OAESV advocates for comprehensive responses and rape crisis services for survivors and empowers communities to prevent sexual violence.