

Minute on Justice and Equity through Racial Healing from the Santa Barbara Friends Meeting (Quakers)

As people of faith with a deep commitment to equality, civil rights, justice, and peace, we commit to continuing our work toward racial healing and inclusion both locally and nationally, grounded in Spirit through study, prayer and action. This springs from our belief that we are all one people, one human community.

Friends Meeting of Santa Barbara (Quakers) stands with those protesting the continuing law enforcement violence against people of color as we affirm that Black Lives Matter.

We are appalled by the disproportionate use of force by the Santa Barbara police and around the country. We mourn with their families as we call for justice for the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and our own Santa Barbara victims, Brian Tacadena, and Bryan Carreno, along with countless other victims of police violence and institutional racism. This persistent violence illustrates the predominant practices of white supremacy in the United States that are harmful both to the oppressor and the oppressed.

We call on our elected officials, including the mayor and city council of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County Supervisors, State Assembly, and Senate members, to prohibit the use of lethal and non-lethal weapons by the police against demonstrators and the continuing disproportionate use of violence against Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color.

We call on our leaders to redirect police funding toward new investment in communities of color, toward mandatory civilian oversight, and toward alternative emergency response programs. We urge the US Congress to pass meaningful legislation to establish uniform nation-wide standards on the use of force by police, eliminate the violence in our criminal justice system, and demilitarize the police.

Police brutality is only part of the racism faced by people of color. In the spirit of our belief in “continuing revelation,” **Quakers commit to recognizing, calling out, and dismantling systemic racism wherever we encounter it: in our lives, our Meetings, and in our society.**

This is a long-term commitment and is not the responsibility of people of color alone. It is the responsibility of white people - the people who built and continue to benefit from the system, to change it. We must listen deeply to friends and neighbors of color, to learn from their experiences and follow their lead when advocating for needed change.

As Quakers and members of the global community, we dedicate ourselves to building a society with equitable laws, quality education for all, principled foreign policy, and universal access to healthcare and living wages. We offer our skills in non-violence, group process, and communication to work with civic leaders and organizations toward the goal of a more just and inclusive society. We seek a world that truly recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all human beings.