

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/a-juneteenth-call-to-action>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

This year on [Juneteenth](#), thousands of people are marching, braving the coronavirus pandemic which has disproportionately [affected](#) Black people to stand face-to-face with police and say: **Enough is enough.**

The Movement for Black Lives and other organizations have declared Juneteenth the kickoff to a [Weekend of Action](#). Hundreds of educational and direct action events are taking place around the country. We at Vera have given our staff the day off on Juneteenth. To pause. To contemplate. To honor our long road to freedom. And to encourage allies to stand in solidarity with Black people. Racism rears its unwelcome head in our [jails and prisons](#), our [paychecks](#), and even in our [hobbies](#). And while this is so on any day in America, Juneteenth is a day to gather our strength for the fight.

As the president of an organization deeply committed to disrupting the American criminal legal system and eliminating its disparate impact on Black people, I'll be engaging in my activism. I hope that everyone who considers themselves an ally of Black people can mark this Juneteenth as a day of solidarity and restoration, a day of growth, learning, and recommitment. Acknowledging the weight this country imposes on the shoulders of Black folk must strengthen multicultural resolve to show up in true, informed solidarity. Here are some ways to make that happen:

We're witnessing one of the most profound societal reckonings with racism we've seen in our lifetimes. We need to make sure that we're doing everything we can to turn this reckoning into sustained action for real change. We can't allow [George Floyd](#), [Breonna Taylor](#), [Tony McDade](#), and most recently in the midst of outcry against police violence [Rayshard Brooks](#), to merely be added to the long list of names, a catalog of atrocities. Shame on us if that happens.

Beyond the heartbreak and hope filling our streets that have already led to the tearing down of [Confederate](#) and other [monuments to violence](#) against Black, brown, and indigenous people, permanent, concrete actions are taking place. For the first time in our nation's history, cities are finally considering long-sought [divestment](#) from law enforcement. People are actively interrogating when and whether to call [911](#) and whether police are indeed the most appropriate responders to those calls. Bail funds like the [Minnesota Freedom Fund](#) are seeing record donations to free people from [pretrial detention](#) and return them to their families and communities.

Still, there is much more to be done, and each of us has an important part to play. How will you engage in your activism?

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