

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/trayvon-martin-tragedy-requires-deeper-examination-justice-and-race>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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CLEVELAND - Today at 1:00 p.m. the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio will rally on the steps of the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, joining the NAACP, the Case Black Student Association, and many other voices concerned over the tragic February 26 killing of teenager Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida.

Martin was killed by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch captain who followed him as he walked home from a convenience store, then shot him. The Sanford police department responded to the shooting, but did not arrest Zimmerman because he claimed it was self-defense. In the weeks after, outraged Americans have questioned why law enforcement did not handle the investigation differently.

Opportunity for change often comes during times of strife. Trayvon Martins tragic death is much larger than simply a confrontation with a vigilante, said ACLU of Ohio Executive Director Christine Link. The circumstances of his death and the ensuing investigation are indicative of the pervasive issues of race and justice in our society. Americans owe it to the Martin family to take this opportunity and change how we address those issues.

From Zimmermans decision that Martin looked suspicious to the deviations in protocol made by the Sanford Police Department, the public must ask why these decisions were made and how we as a society may correct them, Link continued. Unfortunately, injustices happen all too often, and we must not wait for another tragedy to occur.

In the wake of growing concerns over the Sanford Police Departments investigation, the Florida Attorney General and U.S. Department of Justice have launched probes into the killing. Congressional leaders also held a special session on March 28, 2012 to address the incident and included testimony from the Martin family.

The ACLU of Florida has raised serious concerns over the practices of the Sanford Police Department, which has for the past three years been embroiled in accusations of cover-ups to benefit the family members of its officers.

Justice for Trayvon Martin does not hinge on the arrest of a single person, said Link. We must ensure he did not die in vain, by digging deeper as a community and standing against the specters of bigotry, indifference, and fear that led to this tragedy.

The Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences is located at:
11235 Bellflower Road, Cleveland OH, 44106.

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