



RHODE ISLAND
COALITION OF
BLACK WOMEN

VISION. VOICE. ACTION.

A Message to All Responders:

The brutal and senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery are the horrifying consequences of systemic racism and criminal policing, recorded and unrecorded. Since 1619 for four hundred years we have repeatedly seen these executions happen over and over again, without legal or moral accountability. We have gone from Hands Up Don't Shoot to I Can't Breathe with little to no progress in addressing this abomination. We are in mourning for the families of these innocents, the ones we know of and the ones we don't. Our love and prayers are with you as go bravely forward in the fight for equality and justice for those lost. Yes, Black Lives Do Matter.

RICBW supports Black Lives Matter and its goal to “create a world free of anti-Blackness, where every Black person has the social, economic and political power to thrive”. Our Education committee oversees the LEAD program which has provided guidance and mentoring to Black middle school and high school girls for twenty years. Our Economic Empowerment Committee has organized financial education and salary negotiation seminars for women of color, who continue to significantly lag behind their White counterparts. Currently twenty percent of Black women are unemployed, due to the pandemic, and are in low wage jobs. Our Political Action Committee is involved with system change in the Providence School system, advocacy in health equity, and developing a network for action among other community nonprofit organizations.

I am inspired by the protests as I see younger and more diverse crowds marching for justice and human rights for Black people. Let's turn the moment into the anti-racist/equality movement. After peaceful protest there must come effective policy change, new legislation, and reform. What is next? For RICBW our work will continue to focus on our Black community, families, and future generations of committed Black women leaders. We are grateful for your financial and volunteer support in doing this work and any future donations can be made on our website www.ricbw.org. We are proud of the many Black women public officials who are leading the way and making the hard decisions during these challenging times.

We stand on the shoulders of our ancestors and we welcome you to stand shoulder to shoulder with us as we go from aspiration to reality. Yes, Black Lives Do Matter.

Justice and Peace,

Denise A. Barge
President, RI Coalition of Black Women