

Submitter: Ryan Hassan
On Behalf Of:
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Structural racism is foundational to every institution in the United States and is one of the most significant drivers of inequity and intergenerational poverty. From slavery to Jim Crowe to mass incarceration, and from segregation to redlining, Black Americans have never had an equal opportunity for success in this country. The American legacy is no more redeeming for other non-white Americans, either. We are a country of immigrants that came unwelcomed to this land and massacred the native peoples living here, stole native lands, and perpetually made coercive deals with them which we then proceeded to break anyway. Despite being founded by immigrants, though, we have consistently denied the rights of non-white immigrants to live and work in this country. Being a minority in America is one of the biggest risk factors for job and housing insecurity, inadequate access to education or healthcare, and suffering from short- and long-term health conditions. BIPOC Americans are less likely to receive adequate healthcare for the same conditions as white Americans, and more likely to die. In particular, Black Americans are 2-3 times more likely to die of COVID than white Americans. BIPOC Americans are also far more likely to be arrested, incarcerated, and face harsher sentences for the same crimes committed by white Americans.

BIPOC Americans don't even appear to have meaningful First Amendment rights anymore, as was demonstrated during Black Lives Matter protests in Portland last year, when thousands of Oregonians, predominantly non-white, protested for months against the continuing murder of predominantly Black Americans by police on the order of 1000 per year. These overwhelmingly peaceful protesters were met with tear gas, rubber bullets, and warrant-less arrests. Meanwhile, white supremacists breaking and entering into our state's Capitol, as well as government buildings across the nation, including the insurrection at our nation's Capitol last January 6th, were consistently met with little to no resistance.

We need to take tangible actions to not only acknowledge the risks associated with being BIPOC in America, but also to address those risks by reorganizing our racist institutions to proactively deliver just and equitable outcomes to all Americans.

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