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## Nevada State Education Association Statement on Systemic Racism and the Nationwide Protests

(June 8, 2020) On February 23, 2020, Ahmaud Arbery a black man, was jogging when he was shot and killed by 2 vigilantes who claimed he was a burglar. On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26 year old black woman was fatally shot eight times by police after a late night “no knock” warrant was issued for her home. On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46 year old unarmed black man, was killed in broad daylight by a Minneapolis police officer, who for nearly 9 minutes, knelt on Mr. Floyd’s neck while three other officers watched and did nothing.

The Nevada State Education Association grieves because we are outraged at the racial violence that continues to befall our country. The uprising we have seen nationwide in the days since the killing of George Floyd and the black men, women, and children (*Tamir Rice, Botham Jean, Sandra Bland, Trayvon Martin, & Eric Garner to name a few*) who preceded him in death and brutality, is a collective call to action. This is not a “black” problem; this is an everybody problem.

NSEA believes that change must come from every corner of American life. We are going to have to have those difficult conversations in order to break the bonds of systemic racism. Systemic racism is a virus and it has infected American institutions since our founding. It has infected our justice system, our economic system, and our education system.

Moments like this are why we are educators. We must demand a better and more just world because our field demands it of us. We are privileged to have the opportunity to shape society by working with students as they grow and develop their values and world view. As educators, we want so many great things for our students. We want to inspire and challenge them to ask thoughtful questions about history, art, science, and so forth. Instead, our black students are asking questions like “*Am I next?*” or “*When do I go from cute to dangerous?*” and that breaks our hearts. Racism and white supremacy should be antiquated toxic ideologies we read about only in history books in hopes that our kids never have to experience such awful things.

We must all take on the hard work of anti-racist action. It is not enough to state our disgust and point to our various past efforts. It is not enough to have racial and social justice committees. It is not enough to offer implicit bias trainings. It is not enough to be comfortable as non-racist. Black futures matter and we all have the power to provide the space for equity to thrive. If we are going to move forward as a society, we must confront and call out racism and white supremacy in all of its forms each and every day.

Today, NSEA pledges to do more. We make this pledge because our students, our educators, and our state needs us to. We pledge to do more because the hard work of anti-racism and anti-white supremacy must show in what we do every single day in our classrooms, in our cafeterias, in our offices, and in every other area of our school sites across the state. We pledge to break down oppressive racist systems that harm our members, hold back our students, and tarnish our communities.

Until Black Lives Matter, we cannot say that all lives matter. NSEA is ready to start the work.

In Unity,



NSEA President