

Justice for Breonna Taylor

The Black Caucus of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges is deeply saddened for the family of Breonna Taylor as they carry the burden of being another Black family grieving the death of a loved one without justice. On Wednesday, September 23, 2020 the Kentucky Attorney General, Daniel Cameron, announced that the grand jury declined to indict Officer Jonathan Mattingly and Officer Myles Cosgrove, but indicted Detective Brett Hankison on charges of first-degree wanton endangerment. None of the charges were related to the murder of Breonna Taylor, but instead these charges were based solely on firing of random shots. Breonna Taylor was invisible in the indictment, but injustice was written all over it.

This has become an all too familiar story in our country and we are sickened and outraged. The perpetual disregard of Black lives and minds must be stopped. Calling Breonna's death a tragedy is not enough. To once again leave justice hanging in the balance and affirm the cause of broken policing and an unjust criminal justice system that allows unarmed people to be murdered with impunity; this country leaves little trust for young people to hold on to. The hypocrisy of guilt in a civil suit, but receiving no justice in criminal court is appalling. This system has once again shown us that it does not value our Black lives and why the streets must continue to chant, "Black Lives Matter" until this is no longer our reality.

As faculty members in the California Community College system we have a duty and responsibility to enact change and fight systemic racism. We must engage in uncomfortable yet critical conversations about racism and shine light on century old inequities in the education system. We must dismantle our institutional policies and structures that are seeping with racism, which are not serving our Black and Brown students. We must speak truth and allow our students to speak their truth as well. Give students space to be angry, hurt and sad while showing them grace by not punishing them for not turning in an assignment or not showing their face on Zoom or not attending your office hours. Sadness and trauma manifest in different ways and our students are grieving and need time to heal. We are grieving and need time to heal.

We stand in alliance with Black people throughout the California Community College system and across our nation, who are deeply affected by these everlasting assaults on our community. It's time to make a change in policing, in education and in our country. Let's reform these systems and demand justice now.

BLACK CAUCUS OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES