

COP Statement on a grand jury's refusal to charge police officers in the death of Breonna Taylor

Dear Students of UC San Diego,

As you are aware, a grand jury in Louisville, Kentucky failed to charge any of the three police officers in the killing of Breonna Taylor, a 26-year old Black woman who was asleep in her own home when police broke down her door and shot her. The grand jury's decision comes 195 days after police officers in Minneapolis strangled George Floyd to death in full view of the public, sparking off waves of Black Lives Matter protests that continue to simmer nationwide today. The anguish and desolation that Black Americans feel today almost defies description. For the vast majority of Black Americans, the verdict in Louisville is further evidence, if any more were needed, that Black lives indeed do not matter and that the police enjoy a de facto immunity whenever they kill unarmed Black citizens. Indeed, one of the officers who was held responsible was charged for "wanton endangerment"—not for endangering the life of Breonna but of people in nearby apartments. Breonna Taylor's name was not even mentioned anywhere in the verdict. Saying her name is a small act of conscience that escapes even this verdict.

The Council of Provosts at UC San Diego recognizes the legitimate anger of Black students in particular. Yet again, we share the special and distinguishing pain that has stalked Black Americans from the moment they were abducted to the Americas and subjected to violent state-sanctioned segregation and oppression for four centuries after that. Our anger is compounded by the difficulty that COVID-19 policies raise for mobilizing against yet another frontal assault on the rights and humanity of Black Americans. Congregation and solidarity in the face of white supremacy and structural racism have historically sustained Black communities. It is frustrating that a deadly virus, one that has taken the lives of so many Black and brown Americans, now makes collective outrage so difficult.

We Provosts appreciate that students are busy adjusting to a radically transformed university environment that is dominated by the impact of the virus -- an environment that challenges students' ability to socialize and provide mutual support. But it would be a mistake to conclude from the absence of in-person protest on campus that students, and Black students in particular, are not outraged at this latest manifestation of systemic racism. The Provosts are united in their desire to speak for the undergraduate college system at UC San Diego.

The Council of Provosts condemns not only the injustice of the verdict in Louisville but the entire system of anti-Black racism that continues to profoundly disfigure the democratic experiment in the United States. Breonna Taylor has entered the pantheon of ordinary citizens who did not seek violence or confrontation but were nevertheless killed by the police. We support her family and proudly say her name with one voice: Breonna Taylor. We know that Breonna's name, like the legions who have also succumbed to police and vigilante violence, will one day grace the public sphere and live in the names of streets and buildings.

The Provosts urge all students to [vote](#) in November. Voting is essential to ensure that our voices will be heard and represented in what is still a long and arduous struggle ahead.

Students who need assistance navigating this trying and traumatic time are encouraged to reach out to their Dean of Student Affairs and/or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).