



SNCC LEGACY PROJECT STATEMENT ON THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE NBA PLAYERS



The veterans of the [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee \(SNCC\)](#) want to express our strong support and deep appreciation to the players of the Milwaukee Bucks for their decision to boycott the N.B.A. playoff game scheduled for August 26. This is a stance against the ongoing violence being visited upon the Black community. We must also note that their taking the lead in responding to this violence has had an immediate impact that drives the movement forward. On the same day, other athletes from the N.B.A., W.N.B.A., Major League Baseball, tennis, and Major League Soccer took a similar bold stand against systemic racism and police brutality, as did some Black sports announcers, who condemned the violence on-air or protested by staying off-air entirely.

The Black community has historically experienced police and vigilante shootings and killings. Due to new technologies, this police and vigilante behavior has become more visible. But even as these killings have become more public, nothing has really changed. Despite greater visibility today, the Black community continues to experience both justice delayed and justice denied. The police or vigilantes are either never charged, never taken to court, or acquitted in a court trial.

We feel compelled to point out here that in Kenosha, Wis., where Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back by police for no apparent reason, a white teenager strolled easily and comfortably among police while raising an automatic rifle in the air. This teenager had already shot and killed two people. The response of the city's police chief was that if protesters had not been in the street, in violation of the curfew that had been imposed, they would not have gotten shot.



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For hundreds of years fear has been used as a political tool. Certainly in the 2020 Presidential election we see how fear has been injected into political life with dire warnings of the danger to peaceful suburbs by out-of-control mobs. Past political campaigns offer other potent examples: George H.W. Bush stoking racial flames with the Willie Horton case; Ronald Reagan pointedly announcing his candidacy at a county fair popular with the Ku Klux Klan in Philadelphia, Miss., where three civil rights workers were killed by a white mob after being handed to them by law enforcement officials in 1964; and the political shift by the Southern Democratic Party, once dominated by segregationists and white supremacists, to a Republican Party now dominated by those same forces.

We want to stress again that while the police and vigilante killings take place in different cities, committed by different actors, their patterns and practice evolve from the same rationale. In the United States, Black people, whether armed or unarmed, are viewed as a dangerous threat by some in the white community. However, Black lives do matter. That is unquestionable. As LA Clipper's Coach Doc Rivers said: "All you hear is Donald Trump and all of them talk about fear. *We're the ones getting killed. We're the ones getting shot.*"

In our 60 years of struggle, we have learned that the Black community, through collective and determined actions, has been able to mitigate elements of white supremacy. Working with allies -- through campaigns, such as the [sit-ins](#), [Freedom Rides](#), [voter registration](#) drives in the Southern United States, litigation, and the determination of local Black [Mississippi leaders](#), including sharecroppers, to impact the Democratic Party -- the Black community was able to fight against white supremacy.

If we are to live as full citizens in America, the Black community and its allies must now redouble its collective and determined actions. Like those committed athletes and Black Lives demonstrators, we must organize against the advocates of white supremacy. As [John Lewis](#), former chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) demanded of us: "if you see something, say something."



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Over the next approximately two months we have a chance and obligation to make a profound difference by defeating at the ballot box every candidate for sheriff, state legislator, county executive, mayor, congressman, senator, and President who supports and espouses white supremacy. We have to VOTE...because our lives depend on it.

All Americans of good will must join with organizations like the Advancement Project, Fair Fight and the New Georgia Project to fight voter suppression in the 2020 elections. Join with others like the NAACP/GSSA, Woke Vote, Voces de la Frontera, Vote Latino, and MANA to get the Black and Brown vote out for the Presidential election, both up and down ballot. It is only through our collective and determined actions that we can protect ourselves today and protect future generations yet unborn.

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