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Women's Section Statement on Black Lives Matter Movement

Our communities are hurting.

Racial injustice has existed in this country since its founding. Yet, this pervasive, vicious cycle of systemic racism seems to only be in the spotlight when there is another outrageous murder of a Black person. Say their names: Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery - all following too many others. While these killings are held out as a result of a few "bad actors", this explanation largely ignores the fact that we all have implicit bias and that our country desperately and fundamentally needs to change how we think, approach, and address the issue of racism. Despite a few days of widespread calls for justice, the issue of racial inequality almost always seemingly fades away as people return to their normal lives.

Except racism doesn't go anywhere. While many of us have the privilege to retreat back to "business as usual" in the comfort of our safe, peaceful communities, this is not possible for countless Brown and Black people; "business as usual" in their lives consists of coping with systemic racism, bigotry, oppression, lack of opportunity, malice, and hate. Our Black and Brown sisters and brothers should not have to continue living without true support or genuine understanding, and go alone in educating others.

Not this time! Enough is enough. Let us be better. Let us do better. Let us learn, listen, and help bring change.

We are a Board committed to equality in the law. This commitment must go beyond gender equality. It must include racial equality, equality for the LGBTQ community, equality for disabled communities, and all other marginalized communities. We must speak up. We must do more. We cannot stand idly by and allow systemic inequality to continue to exist unabated in our society. If we do nothing, we are complicit. To be silent is to be complicit.

Together we say: Black lives matter.

Now is the time for action. We need to amplify the voices of Black communities and other communities of color, while simultaneously understanding that the onus is not on the marginalized to educate us. We each need to take on that responsibility - listen to the needs of others, research these crucial issues, donate to causes fighting for equality, speak out against the injustices seen everyday, and act to further justice. We must all do the work to get us to a place where we can all feel appreciated, loved, and most importantly, safe in our own skin.

We are committed to ensuring that the issues of racial inequality, repression, and systemic violence do not fade into the background once again.

In the coming weeks, our Board will discuss how we, and the Women's Section more broadly, can get involved in the fight against racism in our community and country. In an effort to keep this important conversation going, we are working on organizing an implicit bias training to help hone our allyship skills. Please stay tuned for more information on this training. We are also starting a book club for our members where we will read and discuss books covering important racial issues (please see the attached resource list for book suggestions for adults and children). Our first book club meeting will be in July and we will be reading and discussing *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander. More details to follow.

We also welcome ideas and suggestions from our members about how we can better support marginalized communities. Remember - we are in this together.