



As we stand at the cusp of the May 25th anniversary of George Floyd's murder, we must realize that white supremacist-based violence against the black community has never stopped. White Supremacy and all hate-filled ideologies such as replacement theory must have no safe harbor in our country.

According to the FBI, Black Americans are the leading victims of hate crimes nationally. Last year, 65% percent of the total reported hate crime incidents were based on race, ethnicity, or ancestry bias. Black Americans were more than half of these victims. Black people endure ongoing racism and discrimination compounded by hate-driven violence that demeans and dehumanizes black lives.

There is also a significant increase in race-based hate crimes including Anti-Semitic, Latino, Asian, Muslim, and LGBTQ+ communities. These ongoing and tragic incidents impact the mental health and wellness of families, youth, and whole communities.

Our country and our state also have systemic racial inequities that must be addressed in tandem with race-based violence. No child should be born into a world where the color of their skin negatively impacts their social determinants which include mental wellness, housing, education, physical health, safety, and lifespan. Race-based violence adds salt to historical and systemic wounds.

Buffalo is one such community, wounded, traumatized, and suffering due to an evil that continues to rear its hate-filled face across our country.

However, a simple offering of condolences will not make a change. It is imperative that elected officials and systems take more drastic steps to address racial inequities, social media, gun violence, and the entire culture of hatred that has been enabled by apathy and inaction. We all must play a part in combating racism on an individual and community level and stand for the rights of those who intergenerationally bear the pain and live with the trauma. Every human being has the right to live in a nation that embraces diversity, is equitable for all people, and is inclusive and empowered to silence the hatred, violence, and terror that has plagued our country.

In his 1965 address to Oberlin College, Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The time is always right to do what is right". Families Together in New York State is committed to doing what is right and stands with the Black Community and all historically traumatized communities.

We must reckon with the truths of our past, and take action to correct the present so that our future is not riddled with prejudice-based violence and systemic inequities.

Kim Kaiser (she/her/hers)
Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Families Together in New York State