

We Have Free Speech: And I'd like to speak to your manager

Leave the White People Alone: An Open Letter

Dear Manager of "Black Lives Matter,"

We have been hearing a lot about "people of color" of late and how these communities have been experiencing prejudice in the free nation that is the United State of America. In case you hadn't noticed, this is extremely prejudicial *itself*. Let me remind you that white is a color too. Since this whole Black Lives Matter racket kicked off, we in the *American* community have experienced nothing but prejudice against us and our children. We founded this nation and laid all the groundwork for the very same society that you are currently hating on. What nerve! Frankly, we find it inconsiderate and downright thankless, like Timmy on Christmas morning when he gets a pair of Air Jordans instead of a perfectly nice pair of all white New Balances.

We of course support and encourage your right to free speech — after all, our founding fathers did extend you that right — but *why* must you do it in our neighborhoods? We have been nothing but kind to each minority since they arrived on these golden shores. We even gave the Indians some nice reservations on which they can smoke the peace pipe and perform dances in harmony with Mother Nature.

Hopefully, you will settle this matter peacefully and without further certain remarks against white people. Ideally by the autumn so we can sink our heads right back into the sand in time for Thanksgiving.

In the meantime, if you need anything, please don't hesitate to reach out. We in the American community will always do what we can to help our less fortunate brethren in need.

Clueless as ever,

Karen J. Hopkins (47, accounting)
Foundation Uniting Concerned Karens of Foster (F.U.C.K.O.F.F)

The Best Places to Take a Roadside Pee: Rhode Island Edition

We've all been there, slogging along on a 47-hour trip back from the Cape on a hot summer's evening, bladders bursting at the seams for a pee. Now you have a handy guide to navigate you through the urine-stained highlights of Rhody's best out-of-home urine stations.

1) Truck Layby on 146 North (just outside Slatersville)

Complete with woods and a view of the highway, this curved piece of asphalt from heaven is the ideal spot to get in touch with the birds and the bees.

2) Speedway on 83 Point Street

Recently voted Rhode Island's #1 gas station on Yelp, this snazzy fuel stop is just the place to use the bathroom and snap a selfie at one of the Ocean State's most prized attractions.

3) The Big Blue Bug

Not advocating this in the slightest (really, don't do this), but some say that if you stand on the head of the Big Blue Bug and pee directly southeast, you'll hit a bunch of those shifty-looking billboard lawyers right in the eye.

4) Rhode Island State House

Rumor has it that the bathrooms in the State House are made of marble, threaded with gold and bound together with unicorn semen. Definitely worth a visit (if true). Catch sight of the 4th largest unsupported dome in American architecture (besides a certain former governor's bald spot)

5) The Side of any Brown University building

For what they charge tuition? You better, you better, you bet.

6) Into a Bottle of Sam Adams

Because nobody will know the difference (this message sponsored by Narragansett Beer).

7) Anywhere in Cranston

They know what they did.

Happy Birthday to ourselves!

Alt-Facts turns two this summer! To celebrate, here are some of the best accolades we've received over the past 24 months.

"My favorite source of fake news." - Donald Trump

"It's all lies." - Newspaper Cowboy

"Thank you AltFacts for helping us, I mean me, win an election." - Vladimir Putin

"I was never in AltFacts." - Gina Raimondo

"AltFacts... I apologize, but I don't even know what you are talking about." - Nicholas Mattiello

[Stable Genius: Carnival clown turns the Oval](#)

into a three-ring

What are we going to do about President Walking Eagle (he's so full of shit he can't fly)?

P and J thought Dubya Bush was the dumbest and least intellectually curious president we'd ever seen, but Walking Eagle has outflanked him. This guy has lied since he could walk and is in so far over his head you'd need a nuclear submarine to rescue him.

Not only does he have to "walk back" his positions on policy because he doesn't know what he's talking about, but his supposedly humorous remarks, like suggesting we do less COVID testing so we won't find more people with the virus, seems to have gone over everyone's heads, except for the numbskulls in their MAGA caps.

Maybe the most disturbing aspect of Trump is his sucking up to every *petit* dictator in the world: Xi Jinping, Erdogan, Kim Jong-un, Salaam whatever the hell his name is in Saudi Arabia, et al. And shall we bring up Vlad the Impaler Putin, who owns our president? Vlad knows you'll do whatever he says, Walking Eagle.

One signal point in the Trump administration is his refusal to learn. While previous presidents took daily intel briefings six days a week, Walking Eagle deigns to attend about two a week. And he doesn't even (or can't) read the written versions. As an example, he claims he never saw the intel about Russia offering bounties to Taliban soldiers for killing our troops, because it wasn't read to him.

So while P&J are not political advisers, while we play those arrogant, pompous dickheads on TV, we have a solution to this problem: flash cards. Even the intellectually challenged Walking Eagle might actually be able to absorb the info in shorthand form, without taking away from his Fox News watching time.

And please, stop supporting this clown who makes the US look like a cheap carnival on the international stage.

Slowly, Slowly Catchee Monkey

Phillipe and Jorge have been huge admirers of Governor Gigi Raimondo's handling of the COVID pandemic, from the hard-assed "Knock it off" to the constant stream of information to the public.

But we are a bit worried about the new hurry to implement Phase III of the comeback strategy. As has been said, there are a million people in Little Rhody, and a million different opinions. Many of them of the brass-necked kind, with a "Don't tell me what to do" attitude. So when you look at the beaches for which the Ocean State is renowned, from First Beach in Newport to Narragansett and Scarborough, there is no way in hell you are going to get social distancing, as has been obvious anytime the sun shines and people flock there.

We have made great strides in combatting COVID, so switching from pumping the brakes to hitting the gas pedal at this point could undo all the good work so far. Patience is a virtue, so let's employ it for everyone's sake. *Gracias.*

Plantation Is More Than a Word: An Indigenous perspective



Indigenous enslavement was common in Colonial North and South America; Image courtesy The Granger Collection, New York

When society experiences a monumental shift in social consciousness, citizens of that society must pause to fully appreciate and understand the gravity of what just occurred. Mayor Elorza and subsequently, Governor Raimondo, were correct in removing the word Plantations from the state's name on official documents. Plantation is a word engulfed in the cruelty of imperial history, and the associations with Black slavery are loud, clear and irrefutable. But even then, in a state that once saw more than 100,000 enslaved Africans come through our ports, the word Plantation still manages to conceal further cruel secrets that eventually merge paths with the greater trans-Atlantic slave trade.

In the 17th century, the word plantation referred to the 'planting' of voluntary immigrants in foreign colonies. It was a practice famously imposed, and mercilessly perfected, upon the Irish during the Ulster and Munster Plantations of the early 1600s. The intention was to claim lands not your own, and place upon them the race, religion and political belief system of the colonizing force, ultimately making that location homogenous with the outsiders – total cultural erasure. With actions come consequences, and the consequences of British Plantations was the cultural disintegration and genocide of those peoples who were being planted upon. The same can be said of the experiences of the Indigenous communities of Rhode Island.

In 1600, what we now know as the Ocean State was home to the Narragansett people. Theirs was a life based around the seasonal movements of the forest, the rivers and the ocean, and upon the fields they planted with corn, squash and beans. Their world was part of an extensive interconnected society of Indigenous cultures stretching across the continent, an incredible network of thinkers, artists and pioneering agriculturalists. Few in that system had any real working knowledge of, or interest in, the intricacies of European religious discontent or their designs on colonization through settler plantations. When those European settlers came across the ocean and landed on the shores of North America, their single-minded intentions driven by religious zealotry and Eurocentric self-belief very much failed to take into consideration of those who already lived here. Roger Williams — whose letters show his request for an enslaved Indigenous child and whose son oversaw Indigenous slave auctions in Newport — may indeed have consulted with those people upon whose land he was settling, but that in itself was boldly presumptuous. It is not like Williams and the Narragansett had a pre-arranged agreement inviting colonists to plant themselves on Indigenous land.

Strong Indigenous leadership under Canonicus ensured that the Narragansett at least had peaceful relations with their parasitic neighbors, but the nature of a parasite is that it grows and behaves like a cancer. By 1675, the number of colonists had increased dramatically, and the locals found themselves increasingly pushed to the west, their vacant lands seized by the planters. With that came inter-tribal conflict as cultures encroached upon existing homelands, leading to even further Indigenous deaths. King Philip's War of 1676 was the last – if desperate – throw of the dice for the region's Indigenous inhabitants. Eight hundred colonists perished, but so did 3,000 Native people. Of those who remained, a mere handful escaped to join other tribes. The rest were sold into slavery.

That word again. Slavery.

Rhode Island's past is blighted by the enslavement of people, both Indigenous as well as African. The first were those who had already endured extensive trauma in the form of land theft and genocide, and all were victims of the planters of the British Plantations.

So, what of Elorza's and Raimondo's decision? Removing the word Plantation from the state's official documents is unquestionably the right thing. But doing so without also acknowledging the trauma

endured by enslaved Indigenous people from the inception of the colony only serves to erase the Indigenous voice. Make no mistake — Rhode Island's Indigenous people stand in solidarity with the Black community; this is by no means a diminishing of their suffering. But by changing the narrative, however good and honorable the intention may be, without including the Indigenous voice only serves to continue the age-old American narrative of sweeping that voice under the rug.

Procorruption: Proudly defending stupidity

I'm a bit perturbed about *Motif* publishing a so-called *leaked* document from our organization. It's bad enough betraying someone writing for you, but like most other news, it was **FAKE!** I would never support such a thing and it's not even close to my style of writing. Covering the arts and pot smoking not enough? You want to be fake investigative journalists?

We support the re-election of Donald Trump 110%. I urge every member of my organization and every American to do likewise.

Things may look dicey now with the country literally and figuratively burning to the ground, but Trump's approval rating is still in the double digits and trails Biden by only single digits. We must stand by our brave comrades proudly and publicly defend our leader no matter how stupid they sound or how much self-respect they lose.

You know the drill:

- Don't let any truth, hypocrisy, laws, ethics or mature behavior get in your way.
- Blame everyone but the President for any accused errors or wrongdoings.
- Relentlessly point out the flaws (real or imagined) in others to build Trump up by reminding people how widespread duplicity, dishonesty, sanctimony, incompetence and despicableness are, and how they are often important to success and greatness. (Things like the Obama-Biden-Clinton crime syndicate, the murderer Joe Scarborough, and Kylie Kardashian misleading *Fortune* magazine to convince them she was a billionaire while only worth \$900,000).
- Remind people that everyone is out to get Trump and overturn what he's done.
- Remind people you can't oppose Trump without electing Democrats. If Democrats think Trump and the Republicans are sleazebags, why do they keep encouraging people to vote for them?
- Blame the media since no one trusts them. Every story has many sides and they often fail to report those that support Trump.

For example, when they spew thousands of alleged falsehoods to claim Trump never tells the truth, do they ever point out all the true things he has said? Of course not! How about mentioning:

- Who among us *doesn't* tell a lie?
- The classic Washington scandal is always based on someone screwing up by telling the truth.
- Sometimes the truth is too painful for people to hear, so lying is often compassionate or in the public interest, especially when millions of people's lives are being destroyed.
- Trump is a funny guy, usually joking or being sarcastic. If Trump lies all the time, why do people believe him when he says outrageous things?

How about when they hold Trump responsible for his COVID-19 response and blame him for over 100,000 dead, and untold economic impoverishment? They never explain that if it were not for the President, we would probably have quadrupled the body count by now.

Do they ever mention Trump's many positive accomplishments, other than firing inspector generals, educating our country what would happen if you elect a certified lunatic in charge and encouraging juvenile delinquents to grow up to be President?

What about claims that Trump is not a true Christian? Do they mention who, according to many Trump supporters, put Trump in the White House? God, that's who. Who opened up places of worship, no matter how many are killed or become sick? Who stood in front of a burnt church holding up a Bible for the camera and didn't burst into flames? So, are you really going to risk the wrath of God by not supporting Donald Trump for re-election? Just askin'.

The Fox's Rabbit Hole: An open letter to right-wing conspiracy enthusiasts

I had an interesting and somewhat disheartening conversation with an old friend yesterday who has recently gone over the deep end of Fox News conspiracy mongering (and worse). As the talk lurched from one preposterous right-wing extreme to another (Bill Gates, Pizzagate, John Podesta's art collection, ANTIFA and the putrid musings of Tucker Carlson), I found it harder and harder to keep a straight face. On returning home I found relief, as I often do, in committing my thoughts to paper. Here is that writing, an open letter to anyone who who has fallen down the rabbit hole:

On Tucker Carlson: Tucker attended St. George's Academy — an elite private boarding school in Middletown. His BA is from Trinity College in Hartford. In my own college days, I encountered many examples of his type: white, wealthy, privileged, eager to argue, reactionary — the sort of frat boy Ivy League wannabe who writes incendiary ultra-conservative editorials for the school paper in response to all those “ultra-liberals” who, in his fevered conservative imagination, make up the rest of the school population. He may fancy himself an iconoclastic “free thinker” who marches to the beat of his own drum, but in truth, Carlson suffers from that most ironic of psychopathologies: the persecution complex of wealth and entitlement. His politics are the politics of deep-seated personal neuroses. He is a sick puppy; don't believe a word he says.

On the subject of John Podesta's supposedly controversial sculpture “Arch of Hysteria” (in case you missed it, the controversy is that the sculpture supposedly bears a resemblance to a victim of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer). The truth is that “Arch of Hysteria” simply is a modernist work by surrealist artist Louise Bourgeois, whose sculpture is often suffused with ominous Freudian overtones (as is the case with the work of many surrealists): nightmarish spiders, twisted humanoid forms, and other death-obsessed images. It may be dark, but it is ART with no overt connection to the demented crimes of Jeffrey Dahmer. In order to make so preposterous a connection, one must go down yet another mindless psychic vortex — the sort of mirrored funhouse parallel reality the internet will readily provide.

People will find whatever connections and correlations they want to find. There is an old saying: You see what you believe. What has changed is how the internet now provides “evidence” for whatever belief you may already have, regardless of how absurd it may be. Remember: ANYONE can and will post ANYTHING on the internet.

On Pizzagate. Let's review: a former president (Bill Clinton), a former NY state senator (Hillary Clinton), their political advisor (John Podesta), another former president (Obama) and numerous others (all Democrats, of course) were either directly involved with or aware of a secret ring of cannibalistic pedophiles operating out of the basements of pizza parlors. Does this not sound crazy to you? Well ... it should. Because it is crazy and it IS delusional and as you spend time and energy worrying about genuinely deranged theories coming straight from Trump's base of support, he is busily fanning the flames of racial resentment, rolling back women's reproductive rights, threatening European alliances, endangering the public's health and rescinding hard-earned LGBTQ civil liberties. This is the reality we should be concerned with: the psychopathic narcissist whose complete lack of humanity has brought on a wave of justified protest.

Bill Gates? Out to de-populate the world with tainted vaccines and microchips? This, too, is beneath rational discussion. Throughout history, anyone who has amassed wealth is often cast as the source for all the problems of the world (for the Nazis it was an international cabal of Jewish / Masonic industrialists). I have researched every point typically raised to support this lunatic fear-of-Gates: that he is being sued by India for genocide, that he has caused countless deaths, or that he wants to reduce world population through vaccine-based sterilization, and not one iota of it is true.

Given enough time and with nothing better to do (and the quarantine has certainly helped in that department), ANYONE can find evidence to support ANYTHING they want to believe. So ask yourself this: why would you WANT to believe such things? Personally, I want to believe in alien civilizations and UFOs because there is something hopeful and optimistic about extraterrestrial intelligence; we could certainly use some of that right now. But conversely, there is nothing but fear and paranoia in believing that “Black Lives Matter” is an evil conspiracy or that roving gangs of ANTIFA anarchists are plotting to take over the country. Such mindsets are classic cases of blaming the victims (in this case — the victims of lifelong discrimination, murder and abuse at the hands of police) for the “crime” of righteous resistance and protest.

The internet is an infinitely expanding network with millions of millions of web pages. Think of each website as a star which, together with all the other stars, make up a kind of universe. When you look up at the sky, you can see the Big Dipper. But do the stars that make up that constellation really look like a big dipper? Sure... if you want them to. But really, when you “see” the “Big Dipper” you are seeing a PATTERN that has become familiar to you. Truthfully, if you can see outside the habituated patterns of dippers (and horses and belts-of-Orion, etc.) you can rearrange the stars that make up the familiar constellations into any pattern you like. Such as it is with the internet. When you find yourself distinguishing patterns that fit neatly into false “truths” that others WANT you to swallow (racist, homophobic, misogynistic, lunatic) ask yourself: why are you willing to arrange the vast collection of information both credible and INcredible into such patterns? When you do so, you are projecting your own prejudices onto a map that can represent whatever you want it to. Gravitate toward the constructive, avoid the hateful and destructive, and remember: If something seems so bizarre it is hard to believe, maybe it's because it just ain't true.

Letter to the Editor: Forest Losses

Global forest losses are one of the big drivers of climate change. RI needs to step up and stop deforestation as part of our climate policy. And if solar is a part of our future energy strategy we need very good numbers on the trade offs of solar for forest. I do not think solar wins, but where solar can provide multiple benefits is on buildings and parking lots. The benefits of shading parking lots can help reduce the heat island effect. Ground mounted solar makes it worse. And the list could go on and on.

The report makes clear that DEM is constrained by a governor who still wants to make Wall St happy, but the only way to do that is growing inequality and climate catastrophe and these days, that leads to pandemics and people in the streets. Climate justice has to lead everything RI does in the next 20 years, or life is going to get very strange and dictators will roam the land.

Letter to the Editor: Thanks and Hope

I am truly thankful for Trump.

That hurt to write.

I'm thankful for this president who has encouraged and incited white supremacy to show its hidden face. I am thankful that racists are free to speak their truth for all to hear.

I'm thankful to be shown love's enemy.

Without the help of Trump, I would not know the true morals of my friends, family, neighbors, and strangers.

I'm thankful for the opportunity to have real discussions about race relations from opposite viewpoints. I am even more thankful when the black voice is heard.

I'm thankful to see, at this point in time, the world awakening to the fact that black people are seen as less than human by a scary, large amount of white people.

I am most thankful for all the people fighting to make the righteous changes towards equality for all.

Thanks and praise be to the powerful voices shouting out in protest that systemic racism will no longer be tolerated!

I see the haters. I hear the hate. I stand with Black Lives Matter because no life matters unless every life does.

I stand for the human rights of all people. I stand for equality. I stand for love especially as we celebrate Pride Month.

I pray for a kind, new world void of greed for my children and our future generations.

May our next president have an intelligent mind, speak with unifying language, and have a caring soul.

Amen

— Amy Jeffrey

[Letter to the Editor: Looking at history](#)

Recently there was an article about the town I live in and how 100 years ago it was a stronghold for the KKK. There was a lot of outcry about this article, but one post in particular struck a chord with me. “You will learn if you put children through school that World War II is merely one page in the history book, and the Vietnam war is barely a paragraph. Comparatively, something that happened in town 100 ago would barely qualify as a comma in one sentence, in today’s school world history.”

I feel those “commas” (small incidents) are important. Without the commas you lose the context of the paragraph and the meaning changes. Isn’t it important to teach the comma’s along with the greater narrative?

There has never been a time in America, or probably in all of history, where some group or people were not being persecuted. Humans are territorial animals and it is built into our nature to form groups of in and outs. Studies have shown this quality of group recognition starts by around two weeks old. Teaching history and whitewashing out the bad things that the prevailing group did isn’t teaching history, but promoting political propaganda. If you look closely at any aspect of our culture you find narratives that propagate the prevailing mythology of the times. An example is the #1 children’s book in America, *The Giving Tree*, propagates female subjugation as did the previous #2 children’s book, *The Rainbow Fish*.

The commas are usually not told. The town I grew up in Bellmore, NY, used to be the American Nazi stronghold and eugenics started in Boston and was the backbone of Hitler's "solution" for racial impurity. While Japanese Americans were stripped of their homes and put in interment prisons, WW II German POWs were put in luxury "camps" in America and integrated into American towns and life. The witch persecution of the religious Puritans was really just persecution of women, along with people who held different religious beliefs.

The commas go on and on. Knowing them is far more important for an informed culture than a feel-good narrative.

Gene Jacobs, D.O.

[Page Turners: Essential reading for steps toward being anti-racist](#)



It's a popular social media trend, lists of book recommendations dealing with anti-racism. You're probably familiar with their contents, *The Color of Law*, *White Fragility*, Audre Lorde, Ta Neesi-Coates, with some fiction by Zora Neale Huston or Toni Morrison for good measure. I'm male and pale, so I can't speak to whether a list of recommendations will actually help any white person understand race, but here's a list that I feel has helped me:

The End of Policing by Alex Vitale: This and the next book on the list are easily in my top three nonfiction reads of the past 10 years. Vitale expertly walks you through an analysis of our modern

policing system. He begins with the inherent vice of police reform, why it continually does not exit us out of our current policing nightmare, beginning with the example of Eric Garner. He proceeds with deconstructing our perceptions of police, how they don't really help us even when we are the victims of crimes, the school-to-prison pipeline, the way they criminalize the homeless, the way police are political creatures and more. This book is essential reading for anyone watching videos of police riots on social media and wondering how it came to be. It's succinct, barely a few hundred pages. An older and more extensive text on police critiques is **Our Enemy in Blue** by Kristian Williams. An excellent work on the militarization of modern police since the Iraq/Afghanistan wars is **Rise of the Warrior Cop** by Radley Balko.

Black against Empire, by Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin Jr: Speaking of aggressive policing, this book, an American Book Award winner, details the politics and history of the Black Panther Party. Few organizations in the continental United States are as misunderstood and unfairly maligned as the Black Panther Party. The book tracks their beginning on the West Coast, their apex in the late '60s, and the repeated targeting and sabotage by the FBI. The Panthers have a rich history, an enduring legacy, far beyond just a five-minute boogiemer in *Forrest Gump*.

The Radical King, edited by Cornel West: What I was taught and most people are taught about Martin Luther King is the safe-for-primetime, offensive to none version. This book, curated and edited by Cornel West, shows just how radical the man was. Divided into four sections, they underscore his identification with the working poor, his opposition to the war in Vietnam and his hostility to American imperialism abroad. King takes great pains to identify racism with economic oppression, something that still applies to our present historical moment. As I see various political leaders invoke his name, I repeatedly come back to this quote by the man himself: "What you're saying may get you a foundation grant, but it won't get you into the kingdom of truth."

Race for Profit by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor: Housing discrimination was banned in the late '60s, but Taylor shows how the economic system deliberately undermined black homeownership. Even though redlining came to an end, many of its racist goals and implications continued to exist through something Taylor calls predatory inclusion. An excellent companion read to *The Color of Law*. Essential reading if you grew up in a white suburb and have had little trouble buying a house or have parents who easily bought a house.

Give Us the Ballot by Ari Berman: If you're like me, your history education in high school ends somewhere around World War 2, with maybe a brief unit on the civil rights movement. This book details what happened after, focusing on the Voting Rights Act in 1965 and what happened after. Super ghouls and ghosts in red states and beyond have performed dozens of acts of counter-revolution chipping away slowly at the expanded franchise to ensure nonwhite can't vote. The Supreme Court of the United States recently invalidated a key part of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby County v. Holder*. As a result, various states have removed online voting registration, early voting, same-day registration, Sunday voting, expunged thousands of voters from state rolls, and implemented voter ID laws. Almost 1,000

polling places would shut down in the years after the Shelby decision, and the US Commission on Civil Rights found a growth in discriminatory laws that made it harder for minorities to vote.

Look, I'm pale and male. For straight white males in America, there's a glass floor, not a glass ceiling. Reading these books isn't automatically going to make you an anti-racist, but it may inspire some radical empathy and humanism. The reason I suggest these books is that the systemic problems never went away. The past isn't dead — it's not even past. By learning more about what it's like for someone to live without the privileges of being white, maybe one day it will be past.

Solidarity Is the New Thoughts and Prayers: People want solutions over slogans

CAMPAIGN ZERO



Our social media feeds are peppered with them — empty statements from politicians, attempting and failing to placate citizens tired of police brutality:

“I call on each of us to come together in unity,” says one.

“We stand tall against discrimination and brutality,” says another.

“I see you, I hear you, and I stand with you,” says another.

These sorts of words are nice to hear. But do they offer any solutions, any tangible steps to reversing centuries of murder and discrimination by police in America? Certainly not. This is why solidarity offered from politicians is the new “thoughts and prayers”: It gives our leaders a way to feign allyship with a movement that they make no meaningful attempt to legislatively support.

Solidarity did not pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964, legislation did. Solidarity did not pass the Fair Housing Act, legislation did. In fact, solidarity has never accomplished much of anything.

It is a great misconception that solutions do not exist to the problems America is facing. Campaign Zero, an advocacy group dedicated to ending police violence, outlines a 10-point policy platform backed by research that cities and municipalities can adopt at any time. These are: end “broken windows” policing, increase community oversight, limit the use of force, independently investigate and prosecute problem officers, increase community representation in police departments, use police body cameras, enhance police training, end for-profit policing, demilitarize the police force and sign fair police union contracts.

Philip V. McHarris and Thenjiwe McHarris advocate in *The New York Times* to reinvest police funding in other community groups to respond to specific calls that would normally go to police — medical teams responding to overdose calls and social workers for mental health emergencies, for example. Another idea: Instead of sending police patrols to public housing, use that money to fund programs to keep residents safe. Solutions to the problems we face are ample; we do not have to settle for solidarity.

So be critical of the response regarding protests from government. Do not be appeased by pretty words. Solidarity cannot be taken to the bank.

For information on Campaign Zero, go to joincampaignzero.org