

We must organize, not demonize: Resist

I've never really trusted or liked American politics, even though I'm deeply engrossed in them. Much of the reason I ended up on the path I'm on was due to my own circumstances with poverty, mentors that influenced me over the years, and not being able to walk away from people suffering.

I've protested. I've been arrested for civil disobedience. I've played the game. I've tried shoving the issue down people's throats. I've compromised with powerful institutions that my values didn't align with knowing it would lead to more good for the people I serve than my

own political ideologies.

I can't say a whole lot to convince anyone that any one person or political ideology is correct. I do believe in human beings and the world we live in. I do believe people can change, and it's neither comfortable nor easy to stand up and advocate for unpopular things, especially in the age of social media. It's much easier to simply give up, mock or avoid the conversation all together.

We can't stand back and not say anything about the ugly racism and white nationalism that is spreading like wildfire through our country.

When I was a kid, in my hometown in industrial Middle America, I ran with some kids that identified with white nationalism and Southern pride.

At one point, one of my peers told a black kid in my school that I called him the "N" word – which I never did or never would. Needless to say, that kid beat me down, literally. I didn't blame him. The reality is nothing I could say mattered because the people I was associating with were racists. It's something I've never spoken of and have been ashamed of my entire life. From that moment on, though, I told myself I would never put myself in that situation again. It was up to me to educate myself. It was up to me to take accountability for my own actions.

My point is we all have a choice. Love is so much more powerful than hate. We have a responsibility to not give our country over to a racist leader and people who hate the notion of government helping poor people. We have a responsibility to stand up and work for a better tomorrow for all human beings.

We are living in unforgiving and unprecedented political times.

It's overwhelming to know exactly what to do in the moment, especially for people who aren't politically active. Doing nothing is no longer an option. Here are a few things you can do today to help move forward a racial justice in Portland and in Oregon.

■ Report racism, especially racial slurs on social media, especially public figures or people working with the general public. If you have peers on your social media groups who are being overtly racist, such as teachers, health

care workers, etc., don't be afraid to take a screenshot and find a way to report them to their place of work.

■ Take the time to support minority-owned businesses. Visit racistsandwich.com for a listing of restaurants and grocery stores owner and operated by people of color in Portland.

■ Join a racial-justice organization with your membership and participation.

■ Seek out different opinion makers and media outlets that highlight the perspectives and voices of people of color.

■ Oregon is facing a \$1.8 billion budget shortfall. People of color and poor white folks will suffer. Call your local legislators and tell them it's absolutely critical that they find a way to tax large corporations for doing business in Oregon.

■ Portlanders can make two calls! Portland Democrats – Ginny Burdick and Rod Monroe – stand in the way of tenant reforms in the Oregon legislature. Call them both and voice your support for tenant protections and banning no cause evictions. Call Burdick at 503-986-1718 and Monroe at 503-986-1724. It's time for change.

■ There are 26 local jurisdictions throughout the Portland Metro area. Each one of them should be contributing to solving the affordable housing crisis. Call Metro at 503-797-1700 and tell them we expect Metro leaders to prioritize affordable housing regionwide.

■ Donate your money to CAUSA Oregon at causaoregon.org. Beyond having to respond to the harsh realities of anti-immigrant rhetoric and ICE raids, CAUSA is working to combat right-wing activists who are already organizing to put anti-

immigrant legislation before the voters in Oregon. If you want to put your money where your mouth is, CAUSA needs your support now more than ever!

■ Become a recurring donor with Street Roots. Social justice journalism is needed more now than ever. Street Roots needs to increase our capacity to provide in-depth reporting on the issues that matter in our community. We need your support to tell the stories of the people. Become a recurring donor today at streetroots.org.

■ Last, but not least. Get out into the streets. Protest. Resist, at every turn. Organize – don't demonize. Bring your kids. Invite your family and friends. Be engaged. Be active. Get up. Stand up. Don't give up the fight!

Being able to help with any one of these things will help move forward social justice efforts in our community. Whether you're a seasoned advocate or new to political activism, we all have things to learn. The reality is, for white people specifically, if we aren't part of the solution than we are part of the problem. Stand up and be counted!



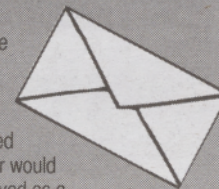
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