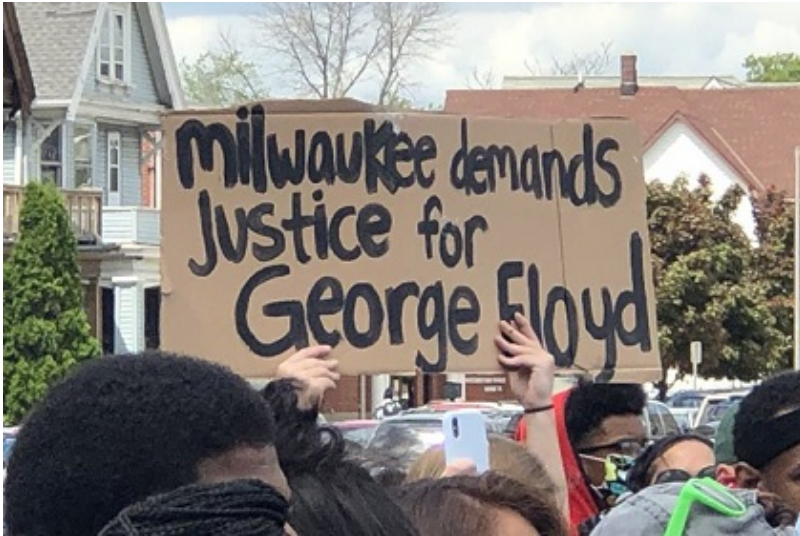


## Erpenbach on Nationwide Protests: Black Lives Matter

Written by Jon Erpenbach Press. State Senator 27th District  
Wednesday, 03 June 2020 10:23

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***We must listen to Black Americans, their experiences, acknowledge the hurdles they face, and make bold changes to address these systematic inequities and injustices, says State Senator.***

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West Point, WI - While many are feeling the pressure of a global pandemic, for many Americans there is another virus that has been running through the veins of our society for centuries - racism. The protests that are taking place throughout our country, and all over the world, reinforce that our society and our leaders need to do much, much better at delivering justice and equity in our communities. No more Black lives should be lost due to hatred and bigotry.

As many of you were, I was sad to witness a woman overtly use her whiteness as a weapon against a Black man, and then I was devastated to learn about the murder of George Floyd. Unfortunately, these were only the most recent tragedies – the lives of Tony Robinson, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Sandra Bland, and many more have also been senselessly taken. Black people are dying in Wisconsin, and all over our country while doing the most mundane things that as white people we often take for granted.



I will not pretend that I do or will be able to understand the experiences of Black Americans. However, as an elected official, I hope to be a part of the solution to put in place structural

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changes that will prevent injustices from happening again and again. We cannot stand for leaders in Wisconsin or on the federal level calling for violence against those who are asking to be heard.

These individuals are our friends and neighbors, and we must listen to their experiences, acknowledge the hurdles they face and make bold changes to address these systematic inequities and injustices.

It is not our jobs as white people to tell those who are continuously and systematically oppressed how they can or cannot protest. I know the damage and looting that's been done has not been from those seeking to put a face on the injustices and giving voice to those who are no longer with us. Don't lose sight of the issues at hand. Don't lose sight of the changes that need to be made.

Change starts with us. It is time to do the work.

Black Lives Matter.