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Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) stands with the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) in condemning violence and racism toward Black people and People of Color. The appalling events leading to the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and the harassment of countless others have led to action across the globe, and libraries must join in this response.

We believe it is our duty to advocate for the safety, security, and health of our communities and that Black Lives Matter. MLA recognizes the specific injustice and harm that Black people in our communities have historically faced in America, and we recognize the role libraries have played in institutional systems of racism. MLA upholds the right of free speech and First Amendment ideals, and as such, we uphold the right to protest without fear of reprisal or being harmed by government authorities or private citizens.

It is critical that libraries reflect the communities we serve. It is vital that libraries offer diverse collections, proactively seek and form partnerships with marginalized communities, and commit to determining ways to diversify our profession.

We also must recognize that only 6.5% of librarians in the United States are Black, and we must do better. Library leaders must effect change locally by:

- Promoting librarianship to diverse youth
- Assessing and adjust job requirements to create more opportunities, and remove barriers to entry
- Advertising job openings in diverse spaces
- Dismantling policies and practices that limit patron access or perpetuate misconceptions
- Provide anonymous spaces free from surveillance and tracking so as to grant a refuge from oppressive systems and law enforcement
- Advocating for library schools to teach American library history through the lens of civil rights, including our role in upholding segregation, as fundamental to understanding the profession.

Library workers and administrators must work together to create environments that do not adversely affect marginalized people within our workspaces and communities. As MLA embarks on developing a new strategic plan this year, we will hold ourselves accountable not only for doing this work, but also providing resources and support for libraries making the same commitments.

A single event, book club, or month of displays is not enough to confront the significant inequity and injustice of the systemic racism endured by Black Americans for hundreds of years. MLA asks that libraries commit to lifting Black people's voices every day. We believe that by coming together in the spirit of supporting and challenging each other in constructive ways as part of an ongoing commitment, we can help build a more just world, beginning with our libraries.