



AMERICAN
PRINCIPLES PROJECT

**BLACK
LIVES
MATTER**

&



**THE
BREATHE
ACT**



**A Radical Movement with
a Radical Agenda**

AUTHORS



FRANK CANNON

Frank Cannon has served as President of American Principles Project (APP) since its founding in 2009 and is one of the social conservative movement's premier thought leaders. Cannon has also served as a political strategist for the Susan B. Anthony List for the last decade, helping it grow into one of the largest and most influential pro-life organizations in the country. He has been a regular guest at the White House under the current administration, where he is working to ensure the achievement of many critical conservative policy goals.



TERRY SCHILLING

Terry Schilling is the Executive Director of APP. Schilling is responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing APP's strategy, messaging and grassroots activity at the state and federal level. In the past, Schilling has worked in communications, development, grassroots, and management positions with Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), Sen. Sam Brownback, and various state and local candidates.



JON SCHWEPPE

Jon Schweppe is the Director of Policy and Government Affairs for APP. In this role, he develops and advances the organization's legislative priorities by working with allied groups and with federal and state lawmakers. Prior to joining APP in late 2014, he worked on a number of political campaigns, focusing mainly on communications and policy. Schweppe is a Lincoln Fellow at the Claremont Institute. He has been published at several outlets, including the *New York Post*, *First Things*, *The Federalist*, *The Daily Caller*, and *The American Mind*.

CONTENTS

4 Introduction

5 The Black Lives Matter Organization

- 5 Founders
- 9 Fiscal Sponsorship
- 14 Individual and Corporate Financial Support
- 15 Policies and Statements
- 17 BLM Praise for Marxist Dictatorships
- 19 BLM on Civil Rights History
- 20 Vision for Black Lives

21 The BREATHE Act

- 22 Abolishing Federal Law Enforcement
- 25 Radical Changes to the Criminal Justice System
- 25 Decriminalizing Criminality
- 27 Legalizing Illegal Immigration
- 28 Severe Cuts to Defense Spending
- 29 Using Federal Pursestrings to Disincentivize State and Local Enforcement
- 30 “Free” College
- 31 Promoting Left-Wing Public School Policies
- 31 Universal Healthcare, Plus Free Sex Changes and Abortions
- 32 Green New Deal
- 32 Repealing the Trump Tax Cuts and “Reconstructing” the Economy
- 33 The Good Kind of “Systemic Racism”
- 34 A Government Takeover of Housing
- 34 Selling America Back to the Native Americans
- 35 Voting Rights for Felons and Automatic Voter Registration
- 36 Reparations
- 39 “Police Reform”

41 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Of course Black lives matter.

But what is “Black Lives Matter” all about? Is it a leaderless grassroots movement, or is it a radical, well-funded, left-wing organization? Are the BLM protests about specific police shooting incidents, or are they about something else entirely? What are the true policy goals of those influencing the BLM movement? These are questions to which the American people deserve clear answers.

But Democrat politicians who have embraced BLM have managed to avoid weighing in on the movement’s agenda. This is almost certainly done with intention. After all, the vast majority of these policies are not likely to be very popular with voters.

In a different time, perhaps an inquisitive journalist would be capable of getting an explanation from one of these politicians wrapping themselves up in the movement. Do Democrats really support BLM’s stated goals of abolishing the police, the nuclear family, capitalism, and our constitutional form of government? Should an organization like BLM be forced to take some level of responsibility for the people it hires, the radical positions it takes, and the violent fallout from the activities it promotes? But today, these questions go unasked because our mainstream media has dedicated itself not to uncovering the truth but to running a propaganda operation on behalf of one political party. Thus, the burden of exposing the radicalism of BLM lies solely with the Republican Party and the conservative movement.

American Principles Project assembled this report in order to help answer some of these important questions and to analyze the BLM movement’s flagship legislative proposal — the BREATHE Act.

THE BLACK LIVES MATTER ORGANIZATION

According to the Black Lives Matter website, BLM was created in 2013 by “three radical Black organizers -- Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi -- [...] in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman.”¹

Buzzfeed News explains:

By her account, Garza wrote a “love letter” to black people in 2013, first coining the phrase Black Lives Matter. Then, Patrisse Cullors put #BlackLivesMatter into a hashtag. Then, Opal Tometi began organizing people online, sensing there

was momentum on which the three women could build. Garza has often told this story. (In some corners this narrative has become known, derisively, as the “Founder’s Myth.”)²

Although many people and groups have taken up the BLM slogan and banner, two major groups are widely regarded as the central organizations of the broader movement:

- Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation (BLM-GNF)
- The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL)

FOUNDERS

Tometi, Garza, and Cullors are credited as founders of the BLM movement (and the BLM-GNF organization) and were recently included in TIME Magazine’s list of the 100 Most Influential People in 2020.³ The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) is an umbrella organization boasting a broad coalition of more than 150 activist groups.⁴ Reporting by BuzzFeed News reporter Darren Sands indicates that BLM-GNF and the M4BL share a common history, and that M4BL’s creation “amounted to the creation of a power

structure inside the movement, one that [BLM-GNF co-founder Alicia] Garza leads.”⁵

Opal Tometi

Opal Tometi has not been involved in the management of BLM-GNF since December 2015, reportedly due to a split between herself and BLM co-founder Alicia Garza. Garza supposedly advocated for “staying outside of existing power structures” and was “not interested in playing ball with Democratic politicians.” Tometi disagreed,

¹ <https://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>

² <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/darrensands/what-happened-to-black-lives-matter>

³ <https://time.com/collection/100-most-influential-people-2020/5888228/black-lives-matter-founders/>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/1f6e88ae5f1be5730ac48b299398e746>

⁵ <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/darrensands/what-happened-to-black-lives-matter>

and instead advocated working with Democratic politicians on issues such as immigration.⁶ She later became executive director of Black Alliance for Just Immigration.⁷

Alicia Garza

According to the Capital Research Center in 2016:

Alicia Garza penned a “Herstory” of BLM and is a “queer,” black veteran activist of numerous Freedom Road organizations. Her résumé includes:

- Special projects director, National Domestic Workers Alliance
- Executive director, People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER)
- Board member, School of Unity and Liberation (SOUL)
- 2011 Board chair, Right to the City Alliance
- Board member, Forward Together⁸

Alicia Garza now serves as Principal of the newly-founded Black Futures Lab, a policy and political advocacy group “fiscally sponsored” by the Chinese Progressive Association.

Patrisse Cullors

Patrisse Cullors is the author of “When They Call You A Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir.” Already a co-founder, Cullors recently stepped

into the role of Executive Director for the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation as well. According to the Capital Research Center in 2016:

Patrisse Cullors describes herself as a “working class, queer, black woman.” She claims the country killed her father, a drug addict. At a 2015 Netroots Nation conference, Cullors led chants shouting, “If I die in police custody, burn everything down ... rise the f—k up! That is the only way motherf—kers like you will listen!”⁹

She has been described in as “a queer polyamorous practitioner of Ifà, a religious tradition from Nigeria, and a person many people turn to not only as a political leader but as a spiritual leader.”¹⁰ She received a BA in religion and philosophy from UCLA and an MFA from USC.¹¹

In a 2015 interview, Cullors insisted that she and Garza were trained Marxists, and that BLM was founded within the ideological frame of Marxism: “We actually do have an ideological frame. Myself and Alicia in particular are trained organizers. We are trained Marxists. We are super versed on, sort of, ideological theories.”¹²

Cullors’ statement is accurate. She was the protege of Weather Underground member Eric Mann during her time at his pro-communist Labor/Community Strategy Center. She spent

⁶ <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/darrensands/what-happened-to-black-lives-matter;>
<https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/black-lives-matter-foundation/>

⁷ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/blm-roots/>

⁸ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/blm-roots/>

⁹ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/blm-roots/>

¹⁰ <https://religiondispatches.org/the-role-of-spirit-in-the-blacklivesmatter-movement-a-conversation-with-activist-and-artist-patrisse-cullors/>

¹¹ <https://patrissecullors.com/about/>

¹² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1noLh25FbKI&ab_channel=FoxNews

“ In a 2015 interview, Cullors insisted that she and Garza were trained Marxists, and that BLM was founded within the ideological frame of Marxism.



a year at their National School for Strategic Organizing “reading, anything from Marx, to Lenin, to Mao, learning all types of global critical theory” as well as recruiting people for the organization.¹³ She lists these three as intellectual influences and stated that reading them “provided a new understanding around what our economies could look like.”¹⁴ She continued to work there for ten years.¹⁵ As Joshua Klein of *Breitbart* reported in June:

In an interview with Democracy Now!, Cullors describes how she became a trained organizer with the Labor/Community Strategy Center, calling it her “first political home” and the center’s director, Eric Mann, her personal mentor.

She told *The Politic* that it was there that she was trained from her youth and grew as a leader.

The Labor/Community Strategy Center describes its philosophy as “an urban experiment,” utilizing grassroots organizing to “focus on Black and Latino communities with deep historical ties to the long history of anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, pro-communist resistance to the U.S. empire.”

The center teaches and studies the history of the “Indigenous rebellions against the initial European genocidal invasions,” the “Great Slave Haitian Revolution of the 1790s,” and the “Great Slave Rebellions that won the U.S. civil war for the racist north.”

The center also expresses its appreciation for the work of the U.S. Communist Party, “especially Black communists,” as well as its support for “the great work of the Black Panther Party, the American

¹³ <https://www.dazeddigital.com/politics/article/39587/1/black-lives-matter-founder-interview-patrisse-khan-cullors>

¹⁴ <https://time.com/5171270/black-lives-matter-patrisse-cullors/>

¹⁵ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patrisse-cullors-b2b58356>



Indian Movement, Young Lords, Brown Berets, and the great revolutionary rainbow experiments of the 1970s,” while flaunting its roots in the new communist movement.

Speaking with ACLU’s At Liberty weekly podcast, Cullors described the center as her “foundation,” claiming it was there that she developed the skills which helped her found the Black Lives Matter movement, after having been recruited by its director, Eric Mann.

Mann, an avowed communist revolutionary, was the New England coordinator for Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in 1968. The following year, a more radical wing splintered from the SDS, led by Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn, calling for violent “direct action” over civil disobedience.

The splintered faction became known as the Weather Underground, with the stated goal of overthrowing the U.S. government. As a result, the FBI classified the organization as a domestic terrorist group in 1969.

Mann led a group of fellow Weathermen who launched their own violent direct action at the Harvard University Center for International Affairs.

In an article titled: “Band Invades, Violently Disrupts Center for International Affairs,” the Harvard Crimson reported that a band of 20 to 30 activists invaded the Center for International Affairs, “roughing up” several staff members and employees before fleeing.

Several slogans, including “Pig,” “Fuck U.S. Imperialism,” and “Imperialists Screw All Women,” were sprayed on the building’s walls. Rocks thrown by the group

broke several windows and a telephone was damaged to prevent police from being notified.

Undergraduates who saw the group leaving the building and chanting “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh; NLF is going to win,” said they recognized some of them as members of Weathermen, a militant spin-off of the older New Left Caucus of SDS.

Mann was later charged with five counts of assault and battery, disturbing the peace, damaging property, defacing a building, and disturbing a public assembly, for which he spent 18 months in prison.¹⁶

According to the Capital Research Center, as of 2016 Mann made over \$225,000 annually.¹⁷

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

“Fiscal sponsorship,” according to Robert Stilson of the Capital Research Center, “is an arrangement through which an organization that does not have its own IRS tax-exempt status can operate as a ‘project’ of an organization that does. In the case of 501(c)(3) fiscally sponsored projects, this allows for tax-deductible donations.”¹⁸ However, “[c]omprehensive financial data for fiscally sponsored projects such as BLM Global Network Foundation are often difficult or impossible to discern because projects do not file their own tax forms with the IRS.”¹⁹

Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ)

According to the Movement for Black Lives website, M4BL is “a fiscally sponsored 501c3 at the Alliance for Global Justice.” The Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ) was founded by members of the pro-Sandinista Nicaragua Network, which

AFGJ has described as its “parent organization.” AFGJ has fiscally sponsored a number of far-left extremist organizations. According to Influence Watch, “AFGJ has been criticized for close alignment with authoritarian or semi-authoritarian left-wing regimes in Latin America, including the Venezuelan Bolivarian socialist regime of Nicolas Maduro, the Nicaraguan communist Sandinista regime of Daniel Ortega, and the Cuban communist regime of Raul Castro. Persons associated with AFGJ have even affirmed the propaganda of the gulag state of North Korea.”²⁰

Though it has since been scrubbed from the website, a list of AFGJ’s “Core Principles” is still available online through the Wayback Machine²¹ The first of the listed principles is the endorsement of armed revolution and rejection of pacifism:

¹⁶ <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/06/24/black-lives-matter-founder-mentored-by-ex-domestic-terrorist-who-worked-with-bill-ayers/>

¹⁷ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/blm-roots/>

¹⁸ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/the-organizational-structure-of-black-lives-matter/>

¹⁹ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/the-organizational-structure-of-black-lives-matter/>

²⁰ <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/alliance-for-global-justice/>

²¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20160208234330/afgj.org/about/our-principles>

"We believe in the right of people to self-determination and self-defense. We do not criticize the strategies and tactics of authentic organizations of the oppressed. Our parent organization, the Nicaragua Network, was founded to support an armed revolution. We respect pacifism as a strategy, and we respect individuals who practice it as a way of life. We do not support imposing that personal belief on others, especially the marginalized and oppressed. Our work adheres to the Solidarity Model which says that our role is to amplify the articulated priorities of our oppressed partners rather than to tell them what we think is best for them."

Other statements in the AFGJ list of principles include:

- "We are anti-capitalist without rigidly adhering to any one utopian alternative economic model."
- "We oppose all US wars and use of US military force abroad. History has shown that US wars are unjust, exploitative, and profit-driven."
- "We support participatory democracy as opposed to Western-style liberal democracy which was explicitly designed to limit democracy and insure control of government by the propertied class."
- "We believe in the continued survival of humankind. We oppose threats to that survival from destruction of the environment, unrestrained Western consumerism, and unsustainable exploitation of resources in the natural world."

- "We support a multi-polar political world and oppose the myth of US exceptionalism and its ambition toward unchallengeable military power, the quest for which is bankrupting the country."
- "We support group rights as equal to or superior to the rights of individuals articulated by 18th Century European men."

Thousand Currents

The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation was a fiscally sponsored project of the California-based Thousand Currents from 2016 until July 10, 2020. In June of 2020, the Capital Research Center reported that Communist terrorist Susan Rosenberg served as the vice chair of Thousand Currents' Board of Directors. According to Sean Cooper in *Tablet Magazine*:

The child of a Manhattan dentist, Rosenberg grew up in comfort—one might now say "with privilege"—on the Upper West Side in the 1960s. She attended Walden day school and then Barnard, and emerged in the early '70s as a fervent activist disillusioned by American imperialism and the Vietnam War in particular. Rosenberg joined the Weather Underground, where she took up with a cohort of other young, affluent, highly educated white women to found a group called May 19th, which by 1979 was working alongside the Black Liberation Army. The three groups carried out a series of bombings, shootings, and robberies in which dozens of innocent people were killed and maimed.



Susan Rosenberg, convicted Communist terrorist, served as the vice chair of the Board of Directors of Thousand Currents, an organization that fiscally sponsored the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation.

This was an exciting moment for Rosenberg. Writing years later in her memoir, she said: “I believed that there was no other more appealing avenue in life than to be an activist, a revolutionary who worked for justice ... I wanted to be loved, to be rewarded, to be an outlaw, and to reject conformity.”

In their aid to the Black liberation movement, the M19 women called themselves “the white edge,” meaning that they were able to buy supplies and drive cars on missions while avoiding questions from law enforcement tracking the liberation’s predominantly Black male membership. For their part, the men called the girls “crackers.” Rosenberg’s role in the Black rights movement satisfied her desire to push back against an American govern-

ment that she saw as inherently violent and racist. “It was necessary to oppose it with force. I felt that we lived in a country that loved violence and that we had to meet it on its own terms,” she wrote.

Over the next several years, “the white edge” of the Black liberation movement helped spring key liberation leaders from jail, including a bomb maker held in New York’s Bellevue hospital. They also worked a series of bank robberies, the most high-profile of which was the infamous botched Brinks armored car robbery on Oct. 20, 1981, in Nanuet, New York, in which six BLA members and four members of the Weather Underground stole \$1.6 million from a Brinks truck, killing Brinks guard Peter Paige and wounding two other men in the truck. In the

“ In her memoir, Rosenberg argued that she “pursued a path that seemed to me a logical step beyond legal protest: The use of political violence.”

course of their attempted getaway, the robbers shot and killed two Nyack police officers, Edward O’Grady and Waverly Brown, and seriously wounded a police detective named Artie Keenan.

Indicted by the FBI for driving the getaway vehicle, Rosenberg fled the scene and went underground until her arrest in 1984 in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, when she and a partner attempted to transfer 740 pounds of dynamite, a dozen guns, and hundreds of fake IDs from a rental truck to a storage facility.

Though the indictment for the Brinks robbery was still on the books, those charges would be dropped by then-U.S. Attorney Rudy Giuliani, who instead pursued the more recent weapons and explosives charges. Rosenberg was convicted of those charges and sentenced to 58 years in prison for domestic terrorism. That term would ultimately be cut short

in January of 2001 by more than two-thirds when, on the last day of his presidency, Bill Clinton granted Rosenberg executive clemency.

In her memoir, Rosenberg argued that she wasn’t truly a terrorist, only someone who “pursued a path that seemed to me a logical step beyond legal protest: The use of political violence,” she wrote. “The point was not to kill or maim innocent people, nor was it to create fear and terror ... I believed that legal protest alone could not always confront power.”²²

Within hours of Capital Research Center’s initial reporting, Thousand Currents took down the Board of Directors page from their website, and shortly thereafter BLM-GNF was transferred to the fiscal sponsorship of a different organization — the Tides Center.

The Tides Center

As of July 10, 2020, Black Lives Matter Global Network is a fiscally sponsored project of Tides Center.²³ According to the Capital Research Center:

The Tides Center specializes in “incubation,” using its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status as a shield sheltering countless activist groups while they wait to receive their own tax-exempt statuses from the IRS. One Tides spinoff is People for the American Way, infamous for its 1987 smear campaign that blocked the confirmation of Judge Robert Bork to the Supreme Court and for protesting the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh in 2018.

²² <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/warren-buffett-black-lives-matter>

²³ <https://capitalresearch.org/article/tides-center-takes-control-of-black-lives-matter-global-network/>

The Tides Center itself is a branch of the larger Tides Foundation, a leading pass-through funder and pillar of the modern activist Left. Tides was conceived in the mid-1970s as an innovative pass-through—effectively a middleman for liberal donors angling to anonymously support left-wing causes. Donors cut checks to Tides, which manages their finances in individual “savings accounts” (called donor-advised funds) until the donors indicate a final recipient for the funds. Their funds are then paid out as Tides grants, masking the original benefactors’ identities from public scrutiny.

In 2018 alone, the Tides Foundation raked in nearly \$420 million and paid out \$291 million in grants, nearly all to activist groups and liberal think tanks.

And Tides’ biggest donors are foundations, including George Soros’s Open Society Foundations, the Hewlett Foundation (exposed for funding infiltrators in the conservative movement), the Ford Foundation, and others. Critics have dubbed the scheme “charitable money-laundering.”²⁴

As Sean Cooper summarized in *Tablet Magazine*:

“If all these organizations and layers of administration seem a bit confusing and opaque, that is the point. Shuttling Black Lives Matter over to the Tides Network does more than shield Thousand Currents from intense inquiry. It allows BLM to join a massive repository of projects that can be administered behind extra layers of protection in the form of do-



nor-advised funds, which allow donors to anonymously fund projects while still reaping tax benefits, and multiple organizational shells which include the Tides Network, Tides Center, Tides Foundation, and a slew of other incorporated nonprofit shell organizations which are housed within a single institutional silo. There, they are overseen by a small band of executives who operate with virtually no outside scrutiny—and can coordinate

²⁴ Ibid.



and leverage the political, social, and financial opportunities that these projects create for whatever forms of gain their donors decide to prioritize.”²⁵

Chinese Progressive Association

BLM co-founder Alicia Garza’s most recent venture, the Black Futures Lab, is a fiscally sponsored project of the Chinese Progressive Association, which has come under fire for allegedly having ties to the Chinese Communist Party.²⁶

INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

On June 17, 2020, BLM-GNF told the Associated Press (AP) that they had received “1.1 million individual donations at an average of \$33 per gift,” since the death of George Floyd twenty-four days earlier, amounting to more than \$1 million a day. “The surge of financial support,” the AP noted, “adds to roughly \$3.4 million in net assets the BLM Global Network had on hand last year, according to a 2019 financial statement of Thousand Currents, the fiscal sponsor which receives donations on the network’s behalf and then releases money to the group.”²⁷

A number of corporations and celebrities have pledged donations to Black Lives Matter,

²⁵ <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/warren-buffett-black-lives-matter>

²⁶ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/group-black-lives-matter-founder-is-fiscally-sponsored-project-china-report>

²⁷ <https://apnews.com/article/1d5d09286d910bc84c48ffe2d3a11197>

although it isn't always clear whether or not they mean the BLM-GNF or another group. Here are some of the corporate sponsors who pledged donations specifically to BLM-GNF, as confirmed by *The Daily Signal*²⁸:

- Airbnb — \$500,000 split between NAACP and BLM-GNF
- Amazon — \$10,000,000 split among 12 groups, including BLM-GNF (*Amazon raised an additional \$17,000,000 for these groups from employees, including the company's donation match*)
- AXE body spray — \$250,000 to BLM-GNF
- Bungie — undisclosed to BLM-GNF
- Deckers — \$500,000 split among 7 groups, including BLM-GNF
- Degree deodorant — \$100,000 to BLM-GNF
- Dropbox founder — \$500,000 to BLM-GNF, plus matching all employee donations
- Fitbit — undisclosed to BLM-GNF
- Gatorade — \$500,000 split among 4 groups, including BLM-GNF
- Glossier — \$500,000 split among 5 groups, including BLM-GNF
- Microsoft — \$250,000 to BLM-GNF
- Nabisco — \$500,000 split between NAACP and BLM-GNF
- Skillshare — undisclosed to BLM-GNF
- Square Enix — \$250k to BLM-GNF among others, plus an employee donation match
- Tinder — undisclosed to BLM-GNF
- 23andMe — undisclosed to BLM-GNF

POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

Black Lives Matter (BLM-GNF) — “What We Believe”

The Black Lives Matter website (hosted by BLM-GNF) took down its “What We Believe” section on September 18, 2020 after coming under scrutiny for some of its more radical claims. The page is still accessible online through the Internet Archive. Statements from the “What We Believe” section include:

We see ourselves as part of the global Black family, and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black people who exist in different parts of the world.

We are guided by the fact that all Black lives matter, regardless of actual

or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status, or location.

We make space for transgender brothers and sisters to participate and lead.

We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence.

We build a space that affirms Black women and is free from sexism, misogyny, and environments in which men are centered.

²⁸ <https://www.dailysignal.com/2020/07/07/these-18-corporations-gave-money-to-black-lives-matter-group/>

“ We believe that prisons, police and all other institutions that inflict violence on Black people must be abolished...”



We practice empathy. We engage comrades with the intent to learn about and connect with their contexts.

We make our spaces family-friendly and enable parents to fully participate with their children. We dismantle the patriarchal practice that requires mothers to work “double shifts” so that they can mother in private even as they participate in public justice work.

We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and “villages” that collectively care for one another, especially our children, to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.

We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).²⁹

Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) — “Who We Are”

We Are Abolitionist

We believe that prisons, police and all other institutions that inflict violence on Black people must be abolished and replaced by institutions that value and affirm the flourishing of Black lives.

We believe in centering the experiences and leadership of the most marginalized Black people, including but not limited to those who are trans and queer, women and femmes, currently and formerly incarcerated, immigrants, disabled, working class, and poor.

We believe in transformation and a radical realignment of power:

The current systems we live inside of need to be radically transformed, which includes a realignment of global power. We are creating a proactive, movement-based vision instead of a reactionary one.

²⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200707214254/https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>

We Build Kinship With One Another

We draw from political lessons, grow in our leadership, and expanding our base to build a stronger movement.

We Are Anti-Capitalist

We believe and understand that Black people will never achieve liberation under the current global racialized capitalist system.³⁰

BLM PRAISE FOR MARXIST DICTATORSHIPS

Two days after the death of Fidel Castro, BLM-GNF published this Medium post, entitled “Lessons from Fidel: Black Lives Matter and the Transition of El Comandante”:

We are feeling many things as we awaken to a world without Fidel Castro. There is an overwhelming sense of loss, complicated by fear and anxiety. Although no leader is without their flaws, we must push back against the rhetoric of the right and come to the defense of El Comandante. And there are lessons that we must revisit and heed as we pick up the mantle in changing our world, as we aspire to build a world rooted in a vision of freedom and the peace that only comes with justice. It is the lessons that we take from Fidel.

From Fidel, we know that revolution is sparked by an idea, by radical imaginings, which sometimes take root first among just a few dozen people coming together in the mountains. It can be a tattered group of meager resources, like in Sierra Maestra in 1956 or St. Elmo Village in 2013.

Revolution is continuous and is won first in the hearts and minds of the people

and is continually shaped and reshaped by the collective. No single revolutionary ever wins or even begins the revolution. The revolution begins only when the whole is fully bought in and committed to it. And it is never over.

Revolution transcends borders; the freedom of oppressed people and people of color is all bound up together wherever we are. In Cuba, South Africa, Palestine, Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique, Grenada, Venezuela, Haiti, African America, and North Dakota. We must not only root for each other but invest in each other’s



³⁰ <https://m4bl.org/about-us/>

struggles, lending our voices, bodies, and resources to liberation efforts which may seem distant from the immediacy of our daily existence.

Revolution is rooted in the recognition that there are certain fundamentals to which every being has a right, just by virtue of one's birth: healthy food, clean water, decent housing, safe communities, quality healthcare, mental health services, free and quality education, community spaces, art, democratic engagement, regular vacations, sports, and places for spiritual expression are not questions of resources, but questions of political will and they are requirements of any humane society.

Revolution requires that the determination to create and preserve these things for our people takes precedent over individual drives for power, recognition, and enrichment.

A final lesson is that to be a revolutionary, you must strive to live in integrity. As a Black network committed to transformation, we are particularly grateful to Fidel for holding Mama Assata Shakur, who continues to inspire us. We are thankful that he provided a home for Brother Michael Finney Ralph Goodwin, and Charles Hill, asylum to Brother Huey P. Newton, and sanctuary for so many other Black revolutionaries who were being persecuted by the American government during

the Black Power era. We are indebted to Fidel for sending resources to Haiti following the 2010 earthquake and attempting to support Black people in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina when our government left us to die on rooftops and in floodwaters. We are thankful that he provided a space where the traditional spiritual work of African people could flourish, regardless of his belief system.

With Fidel's passing there is one more lesson that stands paramount: when we are rooted in collective vision when we bind ourselves together around quests for infinite freedom of the body and the soul, we will be victorious. As Fidel ascends to the realm of the ancestors, we summon his guidance, strength, and power as we recommit ourselves to the struggle for universal freedom. Fidel Vive!³¹

In 2015, BLM co-founder Opal Tometi co-signed a letter defending Hugo Chavez and praising the Maduro regime in Venezuela. The letter stated that: "In these last 17 years, we have witnessed the Bolivarian Revolution champion participatory democracy and construct a fair, transparent election system recognized as among the best in the world." It also denounced "the corporate media lies about electoral corruption voiced by Hillary Clinton, and Bernie Sanders' defamation of late President Hugo Chavez labeling him a dictator."³²

³¹ <https://medium.com/@BlackLivesMatterNetwork/lessons-from-fidel-black-lives-matter-and-the-transition-of-el-comandante-c11ee5e51fb0#.raw9uqjhd>

³² <https://web.archive.org/web/20160112083123/http://www.blackforvenezuela.com/>



**“ We don’t
need a black,
Christian, cis-
heteronormative
man to take us to
the Promised Land.**

BLM ON CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY

According to a 2016 student newspaper account of a speech given by Tometi and Cullors at Notre Dame in 2016, Cullors appeared to give an oblique criticism of Martin Luther King’s importance in the popular historical account of the Civil Rights movement:

Cullors then discussed the guiding principles of the movement, saying they “have everything to do with” challenging “cishnormativity, heteronormativity, and patriarchy” and pushing a “trans-feminist lens.” She stated that history erases or limits the portrayal of contribution of women in the civil rights movement, and women have always been the architects of the movement.

“We don’t need a black, Christian, cis-heteronormative man to take us to the Promised Land,” she added.³³

BLM has generally been critical of inadequate “centering” in “Black liberation movements” of certain groups.³⁴ “We affirm the lives of Black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, undocumented folks, folks with records, women, and all Black lives along the gender spectrum,” their website About page states, “Our network centers those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements.”³⁵ Patrisse Cullors identifies as “queer,” as does her spouse, who additionally identifies as “gender-nonconforming.” Alicia Garza has been married since 2008, and her spouse identifies as a “transgender man.”

³³ <https://irishrover.net/2016/01/black-lives-matter-co-founders-give-controversial-talk-on-campus/>

³⁴ <https://thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>

³⁵ <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>

VISION FOR BLACK LIVES

M4BL's agenda, the Vision for Black Lives, contains a number of additional and more detailed policy "demands." Among them are:

- "A progressive restructuring of tax codes at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure a radical and sustainable redistribution of wealth."³⁶
- The decriminalization of prostitution and all drugs and drug related offenses.³⁷
- "Affirm[ing] gender self-determination in all aspects of life from birth" and enacting the Equality Act.³⁸
- Ensuring access to abortion.³⁹
- "Decommission[ing] all prisons, jails, and immigration and youth detention centers not currently imprisoning people, followed by demolition or repurposing for non-punitive purposes."⁴⁰
- Immediate release of "political prisoners."⁴¹
- "Decriminaliz[ing] youth under 23."⁴²
- "Elimination of surveillance of targeted communities, including people accessing public benefits, hospitals, and services, disabled people, people in the sex trades, people seeking and providing information about self-managed abortion, political



activists, Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian people and communities, and people on probation or parole."⁴³

In addition to these policy demands, M4BL wrote the entirety of the BREATHE Act.⁴⁴

³⁶ <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/economic-justice/>

³⁷ <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/invest-divest/>

³⁸ <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/end-the-war-trans/>

³⁹ <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/end-the-war-black-women/>

⁴⁰ <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/end-jails-prisons-detention/>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/end-the-war-on-black-youth/>

⁴³ <https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/end-surveillance/>

⁴⁴ https://breatheact.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The-BREATHE-Act-V.16_.pdf

THE BREATHE ACT

The Electoral Justice Project of the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) wrote the BREATHE Act and unveiled it on July 7, 2020 with the support of left-wing firebrands Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-Massachusetts) and Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Michigan). The BREATHE Act has not yet been introduced in Congress, although M4BL is pushing for it to be introduced as soon as 2021.⁴⁵ This bill is the top legislative priority for M4BL and serves as the flagship for the policy goals of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The president and CEO of the NAACP has endorsed the BREATHE Act.⁴⁶ The Black Lives Matter Global Network (BLM-GNF)⁴⁷ and its Executive Director Patrisse Cullors have also expressed strong support for the bill.⁴⁸

American Principles Project (APP) has analyzed the legislation and found many of its provisions to be deeply troubling. Extending well beyond the scope of “police reform,” the 128-page BREATHE Act is a Marxist grab bag for a number of seemingly unrelated left-wing activist priorities.

This report will attempt to objectively summarize each of the major issues addressed by the BREATHE Act.

⁴⁵ <https://breatheact.org/action/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/30/opinions/breathe-act-policy-police-violence-johnson-clayton/index.html>

⁴⁷ https://actionnetwork.org/forms/2008_email_blm_breathe/

⁴⁸ <https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2020/07/movement-for-black-lives-seeks-sweeping-legislative-changes.html>

ABOLISHING FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

The BREATHE Act would abolish or repeal the major functions of a number of key federal programs and agencies:

Within the Department of Homeland Security:

- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- The National Vetting Center
- The Homeland Security Grant Program
- The Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Program
- The Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program
- Office of Biometric Identity Management
- DHS fusion centers
- The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative
- The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Denaturalization Task Force Office

Within the FBI:

- Joint Terrorism Task Forces
- Transnational Anti-Gang Task Forces
- All FBI surveillance programs that target individuals and communities based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, age, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability, including (but not limited to) “Iron Fist” and the Safe Streets and Gang Unit

Within the Department of Defense:

- DOD 1033 – the Law Enforcement Support Office
- DOD 1122 – a program that allows state and units of local government access to federal sources of supply to purchase equipment to support counter-drug, homeland security, and emergency response activities.⁴⁹

Within the Department of Justice:

- The Edward Byrne-Justice Assistance Grant Program
- The Patrick Leahy Bulletproof Vest Partnership
- Project Safe Neighborhoods
- The Community Trust Initiative
- Community Oriented Policing Services
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
- The Denaturalization Section
- The Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section
- The National Gang Center
- The Organized Crime and Gang Section

Within other departments:

- The Department of Agriculture Community Facilities Program, as spent on construction of jails, prisons, and police facilities
- The Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforce-

⁴⁹ <https://www.gsa.gov/buying-selling/purchasing-programs/gsa-schedules/schedule-buyers/state-and-local-governments/1122-program>



Photo: Tony Webster/Flickr/cc

ment Affairs (INCLE), including the Police Professionalization Exchange Program (PPEP) and the International Law Enforcement Academies (ILEAs)

- The Department of Treasury Forfeiture Fund Equitable Sharing Program

The BREATHE Act would also deauthorize certain spending purposes within federal agencies and programs:

- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) would be no longer authorized to provide any funding that serves to train, equip, increase hiring capacity for, or otherwise support the activities of law enforcement.
- No agency could provide any funding that serves to further international drug interdiction efforts; or provide drug enforcement support to other Nation States in the form of funding, military equipment, training, intelligence sharing, or the deployment of troops.

- No agency could enforce any existing loan requirements that would prevent the demolition or repurposing of carceral facilities.
- No agency could make any grants that support local or State carceral programs, services, or activities, including new loans for constructing carceral facilities (with exceptions.)
- No agency could increase funding for any federal activities that primarily serve carceral purposes (with exceptions.)
- The exceptions are: “activities that require collaboration with local, State, or federal law enforcement to provide post-conviction, civil, immigration, family reunification, or reentry legal services and supports[.]”

The BREATHE Act would ban federal law enforcement officers from utilizing a number of tools and tactics. Items prohibited would include:

- All “less than lethal” forms of crowd control, including tear gas, rubber bullets,

pepper bullets, pepper spray, flash bangs, LRADs, Stingrays, and lasers.

- Military-grade weaponry, vehicles, and stun grenades.
- Any tool used to collect biometric data.
- TASERS.
- Aerial surveillance.
- Drones used for surveillance or other carceral purposes.
- Body cameras.

Practices prohibited would include:

- Conducting SWAT raids.
- Conducting searches that are performed to assign gender based on anatomy.
- Executing consent searches.
- Executing canine drug sniffs in order to establish probable cause.
- Enforcing gang injunctions.
- Creating and enforcing watchlists including but not limited to counter-terrorism, counter-intelligence, and transnational crime-related watchlists.

Federal law enforcement would be banned within 1,000 feet of:

- All schools or other institutions of learning, or any scholastic or education-related events.
- Bus stops.
- Licensed adult or child day care facilities.
- Any medical treatment or health care facility, including hospitals, community health centers, and health clinics.
- Federal, State, or local courthouses, including the office of an individual's legal counsel or representative, and probation offices.

■ Congressional district offices, Public assistance offices, Social Security offices, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Offices.

■ Locations of any organization that assists children, pregnant women, victims of crime or abuse, or individuals with significant mental or physical disabilities, including domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, supervised visitation centers, family justice centers, and victims services providers.

■ Locations of organizations that provide disaster or emergency social services and assistance, including food banks and homeless shelters.

■ Sites of funerals, weddings, or other public religious ceremonies.

■ Places of religious worship, including but not limited to churches, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, and buildings rented for the purpose of religious services.

■ Indoor and outdoor premises of departments of motor vehicles.

■ Community centers.

■ Sites of public demonstration, such as a march, rally, or parade.

■ Sites of other public gatherings where parents and children are in attendance, such as a festival or fair.

■ Any other location that could reasonably be viewed as sensitive in nature.

Other limitations on federal law enforcement would include:

- Abolishing, expunging all records within, and immediately terminating federal, State, and local law enforcement access to federal gang, terrorist, and extremist databases.

- Prohibiting federal law enforcement agencies from participating in drug enforcement task forces, border enforcement task forces, and gang task forces.
- Prohibiting federal law enforcement agencies, on or off-duty in a contracted capacity, armed security, metal detectors, and other surveillance equipment from Federal Government offices that provide social services.
- Prohibiting the use of federal law enforcement agents, including but not limited to, ICE, CBP, DHS, DEA, and ATF agents to be deployed in response to a mass gathering on non-federal property.
- Establishing a “Political Freedom Commission” to review the petitions of and recommend the release of supposed political prisoners in the United States.

RADICAL CHANGES TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The BREATHE Act would fundamentally upend the rule of law. Some of the most radical provisions in the law include:

- Pretrial detention would be abolished for any misdemeanor or Class C, D, or E felony.
- Mandatory minimum sentencing and the “three strikes” law would be abolished.
- The practice of incarcerating individuals under the age of 24 would be abolished.
- The minimum age for trial as an adult would be raised to 24.

- Sentencing enhancements would be abolished.
 - The death penalty would be abolished.
 - Life sentences and de facto life sentences would be abolished.
 - All sentencing changes would be retroactive so that they apply to current prisoners.
- The BREATHE Act would address existing offenders in the criminal justice system by:

- Expunging all convictions of offenses that were decriminalized under this Act, whether or not the individual has fulfilled every obligation of the individual’s sentence. Reverse, vacate, expunge, or otherwise remedy any civil or other collateral consequence resulting from such conviction.
- Authorizing the immediate resentencing and early sentence termination of sentences for any person who was convicted solely of a drug offense.
- Requiring the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to release individuals who are serving sentences for drug and prostitution-related convictions within 1 year of the enactment of this Act.



DECRIMINALIZING CRIMINALITY

The BREATHE Act would significantly “reduce” crime by legalizing a number of illicit, harmful activities:

Prostitution and Sex Trafficking

- Repeal of the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act and
- Repeal of the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act.
- Repeal of the Mann Act, which criminalizes the transportation of individuals for illegal sexual activity.
- Repeal of the “anti-prostitution pledge.”

Failure to Pay Child Support

- Decriminalization of failure to pay child support obligations.

Conspiracy, Gangs, and Terrorism

- Repeal of 18 U.S.C. § 371 (Conspiracy to commit offense or to defraud United States).
- Repeal of 18 U.S.C. § 372 (Conspiracy to impede or injure officer).
- Repeal of 18 U.S.C. § 373 (Solicitation to commit a crime of violence).
- Repeal of the law banning material support for terrorism (18 U.S.C. §2339A).
- Repeal of gang-related offenses, including but not limited to 18 U.S.C. §521.

Juvenile Delinquency

- Repeal of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. § 5601).
- Repeal of the Federal Juvenile Delinquency Act (18 U.S.C. §§ 5037, 5032).

Drugs

- Creation of an NIH task force to define “personal use quantities” of controlled substances, and repeal of criminal and civil penalties for possession with intent to distribute personal use quantities.
- Repeal of criminal penalties for simple possession of a controlled substance (amend 21 U.S.C. § 844, strike 21 U.S.C. § 844a).
- Repeal of separate offenses for criminalizing the possession of certain tools for manufacturing controlled substances, use of communications equipment and advertising for sales of controlled substances, and fraudulent representations in the sale of controlled substances (21 U.S.C. § 843).
- Repeal of criminal and civil penalties for attempt and conspiracy (21 U.S.C. 846), “continuing criminal enterprise” (21 U.S.C. § 848), and specified transportation offenses (21 U.S.C. §849).
- Repeal of mandatory minimum sentencing (21 U.S.C. § 851) and sentencing enhancements, including “drug-free” zones (34 U.S.C. § 12522, §12521 (“drug-free” zones)).
- Repeal of the code criminalizing “maintaining drug-involved premises.”
- Deschedulization of marijuana, and the establishment of grants for small businesses in the “cannabis industry” “owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.”
- Prohibition of the U.S. government providing drug enforcement support to other nation states in the form of funding, military equipment, training, intelligence sharing, or the deployment of troops.

Prisons, of course, would become less necessary, given that most laws would be repealed and, in the rare case of criminality, most sentences would be dramatically reduced, so the BREATHE Act makes sure to do away with the prison system entirely:

- The BOP would immediately enact a moratorium on all new federal prison, jail, immigrant, and youth criminal-legal detention center construction.
- BOP would begin a process of facility closure that produces at least a fifty percent (50 percent) population reduction within five (5) years of the date that the BREATHE

Act becomes law — and complete decarceration within ten (10) years of the date that the BREATHE Act becomes law.

- Not later than one year after a facility is closed, demolish or repurpose current BOP facilities to serve non-carceral, non-punitive purposes.
- Ensure that the employment rights, including wages, of incarcerated or detained workers in federal prisons and detention centers are regulated by the respective labor authority in the jurisdiction. All workers should be paid the prevailing wage in the jurisdiction for their industry.

LEGALIZING ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

The BREATHE Act would dramatically reshape America's immigration system and fully enact the Left's open borders agenda by:

- Imposing a DHS moratorium on new immigration detention.
- Releasing all persons currently held in immigration custody within six months of passage.
- Achieving a complete end to immigration detention and permanently closing all federal facilities that are currently used for such detention within a year of passage.
- Eliminating all immigration penalties and consequences for arrests or convictions, and making such changes retroactive.
- Repealing the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.





- Repealing the laws criminalizing “unlawful entry” and “unlawful re-entry.”
- Repealing civil denaturalization provisions.
- Repealing 8 USC 1253, which makes it a federal crime for failure to depart following a deportation order.
- Ending all cooperation and coordination between State and local LEAs and immigration authorities until ICE and Border Patrol are fully abolished and revoking all agreements that serve to facilitate detention and deportation.
- Eliminating bans to entry and immigration status consequences for people who have the risk of becoming a “public charge.”
- Amending healthcare laws so that undocumented immigrants are allowed to access the ACA exchanges, removing Social Security Number and immigration status restrictions from tax credits, and Medicaid through federal funding.
- Eliminating any bars [to asylum] based on a person’s manner of entry and criminal history.

SEVERE CUTS TO DEFENSE SPENDING

The BREATHE Act would significantly reduce the Defense Budget:

- The Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund would be directly terminated.
- Budget function 050, which includes funding for the Department of Defense and Department of Energy nuclear weapons

spending, would have funding cut by 10 percent.

- Additionally, a commission would be created that would effectuate, within four years of presidential approval, a 50 percent total reduction in the Department of Defense and Department of Energy budget.

USING FEDERAL PURSESTRINGS TO DISINCENTIVIZE STATE AND LOCAL ENFORCEMENT

Much of the BREATHE Act focuses on abolishing federal law enforcement, while recognizing that the federal government does not directly control state and local legal systems. However, the bill still envisions the aggressive use of federal funding mechanisms to incentivize state and local legal systems to fully abandon the rule of law:

- Reimagines the public safety grant program to incentivize state and local jurisdictions to:
 - ▶ Ultimately empty all prisons, jails, and civil commitment facilities.
 - ▶ Ultimately end probation, parole, and other forms of community supervision.
 - ▶ Ultimately defund state and/or local adult and juvenile “criminal-legal systems.”
 - ▶ Reduce the number of law enforcement officers.
 - ▶ Reduce the amount of contact individuals have with law enforcement.
 - ▶ Reduce the number of stops, tickets, arrests, citations, and civil proceedings initiated against individuals by no less than 50 percent.
- Offers a 50 percent federal match for savings that States or localities project when they close detention facilities, provided that they:
 - ▶ Don’t replace them with increased use of probation, parole, community service, civil fines or penalties, mandated treatment or services or classes, or other forms of surveillance, policing, or punishment.
- ▶ Agree to invest all resources saved and State grants received in non-punitive, non-carceral programs and services, or the repurposing and complete destruction of closed facilities including through transformation into art spaces and cooperatives, or transformation into memorials that commemorate the harms caused by these facilities.
- Incentivize States and localities to repeal:
 - ▶ Public order and “quality of life” offenses.
 - ▶ Laws criminalizing prostitution.
 - ▶ State traffic offenses.
 - ▶ Laws penalizing drug possession and sale.
 - ▶ Conspiracy offenses and accessorial conduct offenses.
 - ▶ Juvenile offenses.
 - ▶ Membership or affiliation offenses.
- Incentivize the following policies in detention facilities within the State or locality’s jurisdiction:
 - ▶ No solitary confinement.
 - ▶ No payment of substandard wages (e.g., any wage below the prevailing wage in the jurisdiction for the industry) to incarcerated individuals.
 - ▶ No bans on in-person, contact visits.
 - ▶ No bans on media and books.
 - ▶ No strip searches and body cavity searches.
 - ▶ No making any “gender”-based restrictions on property, clothing, or hair style and length

- ▶ No punishment of incarcerated people for consensual physical intimacy or for not matching “gender” norms.
- ▶ Allowing transgender people incarcerated in State prisons, jails, police facilities, drug treatment facilities, immigration detention, State hospitals, and civil commitment facilities to choose their housing preferences based on their gender identity.
- ▶ Incarcerated LGBTQ+ people and people living with HIV must receive the highest standards of “gender affirming” healthcare that they request from specialists, including medical providers who are not on jail or prison staff, without requiring that they have been receiving any kind of gender affirming health care before entering the facility.
- No new jails: Applicant jurisdictions must certify that they will not construct, contract for the construction, or complete the ongoing construction of any new detention facilities or police facilities during the grant term.
- Policing practices: Applicant jurisdictions must certify that all law enforcement agencies within the jurisdiction are not engaging in any of the policies and practices banned above.
- Neighborhood Demilitarization Program: Provides a grant to states and localities for collecting and destroying all “military-grade” equipment possessed by law enforcement agencies under their jurisdiction. A suggested use for the equipment is to give them to nonprofit organizations that can turn them into musical instruments or art installations.

“FREE” COLLEGE

The BREATHE Act incorporates the entirety of Senator Bernie Sanders’ (I-Vermont) College for All Act. The bill would:

- Make tuition and fees at four-year public colleges and universities “free” for families making up to \$125,000 a year.
- Make tuition and fees for community colleges “free” for all attendees.



Photo: Ted Eytan/Flickr/cc

PROMOTING LEFT-WING PUBLIC SCHOOL POLICIES

The BREATHE Act includes a number of miscellaneous proposals that would incentivize the dramatic reshaping of the K-12 education system through various programs, including:

- Developing anti-American curricula that “critically examine the political, economic, and social impacts of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, racism, white supremacy, genocide against Indigenous peoples, patriarchy, and slavery, while acknowledging and addressing students’ material and cultural needs.”
- Limiting the expansion of educational programs that encourage school privatization and/or “deplete resources” from public school systems.
- Abolishing status offenses (i.e., curfew, truancy, and runaway law), and school-based offenses, including disorderly conduct, assaults, and thefts that “criminalize” youth or their parents.
- Creating a clear, time-bound plan for closing all youth detention facilities within the jurisdiction.
- Removing police, School Resource Officers (SROs), ICE, probation, armed security, metal detectors, and other surveillance equipment and practices from school campuses, including college and university campuses.
- Prohibiting the arming of school teachers or staff.
- Creating guidance for local school districts that would ban, among other things, punishments for truancy, disruption, disobedience, disrespect, disorderly conduct, defiance, dress code violations, or grooming code violations.
- Providing free, high-quality “health” services, including abortion and other “reproductive health” services, at schools (including colleges and universities) and/or at nearby clinics.

UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE, PLUS FREE SEX CHANGES AND ABORTIONS

The BREATHE Act endorses Medicare for All through a Sense of Congress:

“All people must have access to high-quality, equitable, and universal healthcare, including through a Medicare-for-All system that guarantees, among other things: Specific services for queer, gender nonconforming, and transgender people; full bodily autonomy; and full reproductive services.”

In addition to reversing the Hyde Amendment, a long sought-after priority for abortion activists, the bill explicitly provides taxpayer dollars for both abortion and sex changes:

- Ensuring that anyone who receives care or insurance through the Federal Government will have coverage for abortion services.
- Prohibiting federal, State, and local policymakers from interfering with private insurers’ decisions to provide abortion cover-

age, including through the Affordable Care Act insurance marketplaces.

- Incentivizing local jurisdictions to expand or enhance the services offered at neighborhood-based “health” centers, which

include: “Comprehensive sexual and reproductive healthcare, including contraception, abortion, STI prevention and care, maternal care, and gender affirming care for transgender, gender nonconforming, non-binary, and intersex people.”

GREEN NEW DEAL

The BREATHE Act endorses a Green New Deal through a Sense of Congress:

“The Federal Government should enact a Green New Deal that dramatically reduces greenhouse gas emissions nationally and invests in transformative, equitable

solutions to address the racial injustice and climate crises.”

Additionally, the bill allocates \$15 billion for an “environmental and climate justice grant program.”

REPEALING THE TRUMP TAX CUTS AND “RECONSTRUCTING” THE ECONOMY

The BREATHE Act mostly repeals the Trump tax cuts, while implementing a number of left-wing economic proposals. Some of the highlights include:

- Repeal of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, except for provisions that increased the size of the standard deduction, allowed a tax credit for paid family and medical leave, and allowed a tax exemption for parking and public transportation provided to employees.
- Establishing a Universal Basic Income by eliminating the child-related components of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and providing a universal benefit for all taxpayers.

- Expanding the EITC credits to Puerto Rico and to ITIN filers.
- Creating a federal jobs guarantee pilot program by incorporating Sen. Cory Booker’s (D-New Jersey) Incorporate Federal Jobs Guarantee Development Act.
- Establishing a wealth tax up to 8 percent on households with a net worth of \$32 million or more.
- Creating a national wealth registry with stringent third-party reporting requirements.
- Incentivizing state and local jurisdictions to, among other things, raise the minimum wage to \$24 per hour (pegged to inflation).

- Closing the “loophole” that lets wealthy Americans pass trust fund assets, such as stock, to their kids without paying taxes on the increase in the value of those assets.
- Ending the stepped-up basis loophole and requiring the wealthy to pay income tax on previously untaxed capital gains at the time of transfer to heirs.
- Incorporating the For the 99.8 Percent Act, introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), which taxes estates valued at over \$1 billion at a rate of 77 percent and lowers the exclusion amount for estates to \$3.5 million.
- Establishing a 10% surtax on adjusted gross income over \$2 million for couples and \$1 million for individuals, applied to all income, including work and investments.
- Restoring the corporate income tax rate to 35 percent and assessing a 7 percent surtax on reported corporate profits that exceed \$100 million.
- Establishing a financial transactions tax by incorporating the Wall Street Tax Act, introduced by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii).

THE GOOD KIND OF “SYSTEMIC RACISM”

Many of the proposals in the BREATHE Act seek to implement “legal” forms of discrimination on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. Two examples include:

- Developing a land trust within the Department of Agriculture (USDA) that will:
 - ▶ Explore all options for purchasing farmland in such a way that furthers racial “equity” in the industry.
 - ▶ Sell this farmland to beginning farmers who come from marginalized or under-represented communities, allowing these farmers to purchase the land interest-free and at a reduced and/or subsidized rate.
 - ▶ Include specific benchmarks for sales to Black farmers.
- Creating a Commission on Economic Security Program Redesign that will identify ways that Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding could be restructured to ensure a basic

income for communities that have faced “historic discrimination” from both the labor market and social programs, including discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, status of having a criminal conviction, or any other protected characteristics.



A GOVERNMENT TAKEOVER OF HOUSING

The BREATHE Act would fundamentally change housing for the worse, providing the federal government with unprecedented control over individual housing units and local communities, while implementing a number of “legal” forms of discrimination that would almost assuredly run afoul of existing civil rights law. Some of the provisions in the bill include:

- Spending \$1 trillion to build 12 million “permanently affordable” units of social housing that will exist permanently off the private housing market, and instead be owned and operated by local governments, non-profit providers, public housing authorities (PHAs), community land trusts, cooperatives, or mutual housing associations.
- Requiring the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to develop a grant program that provides assistance with down payments and closing costs, specifically for communities that were “historically redlined or subject to other housing discrimination.”
- Requiring HUD to establish a pilot program called the Housing Restoration Fund, whereby federal funds would be used to buy, transfer, and restore abandoned properties in selected localities. These properties will be granted to local residents “who have been impacted by redlining or racial segregation.”
- New stand-alone federal protections against housing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, and immigration status.
- Banning public housing agencies (PHAs) from denying or terminating federally assisted housing based on criminal conduct by the applicant or tenant, or based on rental history or prior evictions.
- Instituting incentives to promote dense housing development, such as density bonuses.
- Using grant programs to incentivize jurisdictions to, among other things, establish protections against “source of income” discrimination in public and private housing.
- Using grants to also incentivize jurisdictions to revise minimum lot size requirements and repeal community bans and/or limits on multifamily housing units.

SELLING AMERICA BACK TO THE NATIVE AMERICANS

The BREATHE Act establishes a process whereby Tribal Nations have a right of first refusal for the purchase of any public lands that are made for sale. This could effectively end the sale of any public lands to Americans seeking to increase

its value for a private use. According to the Congressional Research Service, the federal government currently owns roughly 640 million acres of land — about 28.8 percent of all land in the United States.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42346.pdf>

VOTING RIGHTS FOR FELONS AND AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

The BREATHE Act effectively nationalizes the election system and implements a number of election reforms designed to benefit Democrats and encourage systemic voter fraud, including:

- Voting rights for felons and currently incarcerated individuals.
- A ban on “prison gerrymandering.”
- Automatic, same-day voter registration.
- “Unhindered access to vote-by-mail.”
- Extended early voting periods and adequate voting hours at polling locations.
- A ban on purging voters from the election rolls.

Additionally:

- States and localities would only gain full federal funding of all State and local election costs if those elections also adhere to the new “federal election uniform standards.”
- The bill would establish a federal public financing program for grassroots, small-dollar driven political campaigns, with a 6-to-1 match for small donations. “Small-dollar” would mean under \$200.
- In a Sense of Congress, the bill also calls for DC statehood and immediate passage of the Voting Rights Advancement Act and the For The People Act.



Photo: Peg Hunter/Flickr/cc



Photo: Fibonacci Bluer/Flickr/cc

REPARATIONS

A major part of the BREATHE Act is the creation of four commissions to “study and establish reparations programs for the following harms: slavery, the War on Drugs and mass criminalization, police violence, and immigration enforcement.” It would also establish a fifth “Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation.”

Through a Sense of Congress, the BREATHE Act explains the need for these commissions:

“The government, responsible corporations, and other institutions that have

profited from harming Black people—whether through colonialism, slavery, and institutional segregation or through through redlining, mass incarceration, and surveillance—must repair the harms done, including through passing the ‘Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act’ and creating other commissions that explicitly examine and repair harms from police violence, the War on Drugs, and the criminalization of people who engage in the sex trade.”

“The government, responsible corporations, and other institutions must furthermore address the harms inflicted on Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Muslim, Jewish, transgender, and disabled persons and peoples, including through programs that address historical and ongoing harms including violent immigration enforcement, genocide against Native Americans, and racist immigration policies.”

The BREATHE Act tasks the “War on Drugs and Mass Criminalization Reparations Commission” with developing a report that will provide recommendations for reparations to all those who have “suffered” as a result of “the devastating impacts of the War on Drugs, the criminalization of prostitution, mass criminalization and incarceration, and children and other family members left behind during mass criminalization, particularly children who have been placed in foster care as a result of their guardian’s incarceration.”

The BREATHE Act also establishes a Commission to Study Police Violence Reparations and a Commission to Study Immigration Enforcement Reparations.

The final commission – the “Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation” – is required to explain and acknowledge, among other things:

- “How the American institution of slavery, as well as other examples enumerated in this resolution, represents intentional and blatant violations of every American’s most basic right to a free and decent life;
- “How the consequences of these oppressions have cascaded for centuries, across

generations, beyond the era of active enslavement, imperiling for descendants of slaves and other targets of oppression what should have otherwise been every American’s right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and

- “How Reconstruction, the civil rights movement, and other efforts to redress the grievances of marginalized people were sabotaged, both intentionally and unintentionally, by those in power, thus rendering the accomplishments of these efforts transitory and unsustainable, and further embedding the racial hierarchy in our society.”

The Commission shall then assess government actions directed against Black, Brown, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, and other populations of color, including:

- “The creation of the Federal Housing Administration, which adopted specific policies designed to incentivize residential segregation.
- “The enactment of legislation creating the Social Security program, for which most African Americans were purposely rendered ineligible during its first two decades.
- “The GI bill, which left administration of its programs to the States, thus enabling blatant discrimination against African American GIs.
- “The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which allowed labor unions to discriminate based on race.
- “Subprime lending aimed purposefully at families of color.

- “Disenfranchisement of Native Americans, who, until 1924, were denied citizenship on land they had occupied for millennia.
- “Federal Indian Boarding School policy during the 19th and 20th centuries, the purpose of which was to ‘civilize’ Native children through methods intended to eradicate Native cultures, traditions, and languages.
- “Land policies toward Indian Tribes, such as the allotment policy, which caused the loss of over 90 million acres of Tribal lands, two-thirds of which were guaranteed to Tribes by treaties and other Federal laws, and similar unjustified land grabs from Tribes that occurred regionally throughout the late 1800s and into the Termination Era in the 1950s and 1960s.
- “The involuntary removal of Mexicans and United States citizens of Mexican descent through large-scale discriminatory deportation programs in the 1930s and 1950s.
- “The United States annexation of Puerto Rico, which made Puerto Ricans citizens of the United States without affording them voting rights.
- “Racial discrimination against Latino Americans, which has forced them to fight continuously for equal access to employment, housing, health, financial services, and education.
- “The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which effectively halted immigration from China and barred Chinese immigrants from becoming citizens of the United States, and which was the first instance of xenophobic legislation signed into law specifically targeting a specific group of people based on ethnicity.
- “The treatment of Japanese Americans, despite no evidence of disloyalty, as suspect and traitorous in the very country they helped to build, leading most notably to the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans beginning in 1942.
- “The conspiracy to overthrow the Kingdom of Hawaii and annex the land of the Kingdom of Hawaii, without the consent of or compensation to the Native Hawaiian people of Hawaii.
- “The refusal to support European Jews by raising immigration quotas during World War II, notwithstanding overwhelming evidence of Nazi genocide and the urgent need to modify immigration policies so as to save human life.
- “Decades of inaction and inattention regarding the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.
- “The United States history of colonialism in the Pacific, which has resulted in economic, health, and educational disparities among other inequities, for people in United States territories, as well as independent nations with which it has treaty obligations.”

“POLICE REFORM”

Near the tail end of the legislative text, the BREATHE Act finally tackles the issue of “police reform” — supposedly what the Black Lives Matter movement is all about. The bill would do the following:

- Abolish qualified immunity for federal law enforcement and guarantee a private right of action for recovering damages when a federal officer has “violated a person’s constitutional rights.”
- Establish a competitive grant that will “promote police accountability.” This competitive grant would award funding to States and localities if they make specific reforms, which include:
 - ▶ “Dissolving police departments that have shown a pattern of misconduct.
 - ▶ “Eliminating State statutes that protect officers from misconduct allegations and disciplinary proceedings.
 - ▶ “Abolishing State Law Enforcement Officer Bills of Rights.”
- The grant funding would be used to “pay reparations to individuals who were impacted by police brutality” and to “invest in non-carceral, non-punitive public safety programs.”



A black and white photograph of a person holding a protest sign. The sign is made of cardboard and has the words "WHITE SILENCE" on the top line, an equals sign on the middle line, and "VIOLENCE" on the bottom line. The person's hand is visible at the bottom of the sign, and they are wearing a watch on their left wrist. The background is dark and out of focus.

WHITE
SILENCE
=
VIOLENCE

CONCLUSION

It's understandable why so many gravitate toward the Black Lives Matter movement. Who could oppose Black lives? Who fundamentally disagrees with the phrase "Black lives matter"? But as we have demonstrated in this report, that phrase is a rhetorical Trojan horse. Black Lives Matter isn't about saving Black lives — it's about staging a political and cultural revolution. It's about shredding the Constitution and overthrowing our Republican form of government. It's about abolishing the rule of law and replacing it with an identitarian race-based caste system.

One simply cannot separate the phrase from the movement, or the movement from the agenda. They are all intertwined. Uttering the phrase is an endorsement of the movement. Endorsing the movement is support for the BREATHE Act. And that's where all of this is ultimately headed.

It is difficult to talk about the BREATHE Act without sounding hyperbolic. We did our best to fairly and accurately summarize some of the policy goals of the proposal we find most concerning, but our list is not exhaustive. There is much, much more. It is deeply radical. The authors of the bill would likely agree with that statement. Not every suggestion in the bill is bad, but the good suggestions were few and far between.

As a whole, the BREATHE Act is easily one of the worst and most dangerous set of policy proposals put forward by any group in recent memory. If enacted, it would harm and endanger all Americans, including (and perhaps especially) those it purports to be trying to help. At times,

the bill reads like a list of demands from a terrorist group, and at other times like an affluent graduate student's fever-dream of anarcho-communist "utopia."

Dismantling federal anti-terrorism law enforcement and databases, while legalizing material support for terrorism? Banning law enforcement from being within 1,000 feet of a *bus stop*, and, inexplicably, from using body cameras? Effectively legalizing drug dealing, drug use, prostitution and pimping? Unfettered, unpenalized, and unstoppable illegal immigration? Reparations for — or at least a commission to *study* reparations for — "Latinx", Indigenous, Asian, Muslim, Jewish, transgender, disabled persons, illegal immigrants, drug dealers, prostitutes and pimps, and on, and on, and on? The abolition of prisons? Who is this legislation supposed to help?

Meanwhile, the pseudo-grassroots "movement" pushes on. It is not possible to dismiss the BREATHE Act as the product of some fringe and powerless ideologue. The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) is made up of more than 150 groups, many well-funded. Their coalition partner, the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation (BLM-GNF), which is pushing the bill, is fresh off a summer of multi-million dollar donations from America's largest corporations. Celebrities are rushing to join the BREATHE Act's "Artist Council."⁵¹ Even the president of the NAACP has written an op-ed, which CNN has dutifully published, entitled "The BREATHE Act is the policy change America needs."⁵²

⁵¹ <https://breatheact.org/artist-council/>

⁵² <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/30/opinions/breathe-act-policy-police-violence-johnson-clayton/index.html>

If anything (besides the riots) can accurately be described as the product of the Black Lives Matter “movement” as a whole, it is the BREATHE Act. So where do public supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement stand? Where do the incurious “journalists” — those brave men and women on the front lines who refuse to cover BLM in any sort of meaningful way — where do they stand? Where do corporations that fund BLM stand? Where do leading Democrats stand?

It simply is not acceptable that an entire political party is being allowed to remain silent on legislation so dangerous, being pushed by some of the party’s own leading activists — including BLM-GNF, M4BL, the NAACP, and at least two Members of Congress.

Democrats must be forced to answer for legislation that is so fundamentally antithetical to the rule of law. If they plan on passing this bill, the American people deserve to know about it.

ABOUT AMERICAN PRINCIPLES PROJECT

When our Founders put this country together, they clearly articulated the essence of human dignity: that all are created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, among them the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

At APP, we believe these principles are central to what makes the American experiment so unique. We also believe that human dignity has often been overlooked in present-day policy debates. Therefore, we strongly affirm that emphasizing human dignity in our politics is fundamental to the flourishing of this country.

APP strives to put these values into action through our work in impacting key elections, promoting strategic legislation, and conducting groundbreaking research. We stand with all those Americans who believe, as we do, in re-establishing human dignity as the basis for American society.



To find out more information about APP, including how to further support our work, please visit our website at [**www.AmericanPrinciplesProject.org**](http://www.AmericanPrinciplesProject.org).



AMERICAN
PRINCIPLES PROJECT

2800 Shirlington Road, Suite 1201, Arlington, VA 22206
202.503.2010 | www.americanprinciplesproject.org