

OUTLaws & Allies
University of Kansas School of Law

Statement of Support for BLSA and Black Lives

As the justified protests against the extrajudicial murders of Black and Brown individuals continue, it is time for us to take a stand and become accomplices, not just allies. We, as the Queer community, owe our rights to Black and Brown Queer and Trans individuals. The Stonewall *Riots* set the stage for a movement that is still continuing. Queer rights have advanced quickly in the last fifty-one years. It is concerning that the rights of our Black and Brown siblings have not advanced in the same way. The Black community in Green Hall is reeling from the pain caused by recent events and the culmination of intergenerational racial violence. We must center them in our conversations and make sure they are protected above all else.

All law students are taught to be zealous advocates from the moment they enter law school as lives of people may be in our hands. There is no reason any law student should be silent right now. We have the ability to create the substantive change to the legal system our predecessors did not. This ability does not materialize when we earn our degree. We *must* exercise our voice and our skills in this moment to loudly, firmly, and repeatedly say that Black Lives Matter, and have always mattered.

We refuse to sit idly by as Black people continue to be targeted by the State and its police. Black people are regularly victims of extreme and illegal police brutality, usually costing them their lives. The intersection of race, gender, and sexuality is often a violent one. We are acutely aware of the overwhelming amount of Black and Brown Trans people that have been murdered. In a time where there are few words we can say to help the situation, we choose to use action instead to support our community. We fully support the Black Law Student Association (BLSA) in making this world a more equitable place for Black people.

As a community it is imperative for everyone to be using their voices right now; it is not a time to be quiet. We encourage everyone to sign petitions, contact their elected officials, donate, peacefully protest, and educate themselves. Here is a helpful link: <https://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co/>. This conversation is not just for today, it is a social change that must be continued everyday moving forward.

We, as OUTLaws and Allies, are using our voice to amplify the voices of Black and Brown individuals around us. We fully support any and all action called for by BLSA and we call on the following action items to be implemented:

1. The University of Kansas School of Law makes a better effort at recruiting Black and Brown law students. In 2019, 78.8% of the law students at the University of Kansas were white, only 4.5% identified as Black. OUTLaws remain willing to assist in these efforts by attending diverse undergraduate events and serving as Ambassadors to KU Law.
2. The University of Kansas School of Law hosts and makes available Legal Observer Trainings with special emphasis on protests against police brutality and making it a pro bono opportunity for the students that wish to participate. We will request the members of OUTLaws to attend the training, and that our Board will always be trained.

To reiterate, Black Lives Matter. OUTLaws and Allies *will continue to create a safe space for all people that live within the margins of our society. We stand in support and will continue to do so with every tool at our disposal.*

Signed,

Heddy Pierce, Heidi Wolff-Stanton, and Harrison Baker, 2020-2021 Board of OUTLaws and Allies
Delaney Hiegert, Alexis Pearson, Ryan Gordon, and Marisol Garcia 2019-2020 OUTLaws and Allies