

This is a reprint of the statement that SALT issued in 2014 following the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The redline edits reflect the minor changes that were made to address the most recent incidents of police brutality. As this statement highlights, racialized state violence remains a constant threat to Black people. It is past time to move from words to actions. Following this statement, SALT has started a list of concrete steps law schools can and must take to support Black students, instill an anti-racist framework within their institution, and begin to chip away at the structural oppression and racism that plagues our institutions. We invite you to share your ideas at www.saltlaw.org.

~~SALT STATEMENT ON FERGUSON, MISSOURI~~
November 21, 2014 ~~June 10, 2020~~

~~the United States~~

The Society of American Law Teachers (SALT) calls for the upholding of the rule of law in relation to the death of ~~Michael Brown~~ ^{George Floyd, Floyd's}. ~~Michael Brown's death and the subsequent protests in Ferguson~~ remind us of the consequences when the community loses faith and trust in America's policing and judicial systems. SALT is concerned that violence by the police against unarmed Black people is ~~becoming increasingly common~~ ^{widespread and largely unchecked}. The actions of the police in ~~Ferguson~~ ^{the United States} and the community reaction are a microcosm of the inequalities and profound mistrust that pervade many communities around the country that must be addressed.

SALT and its members are committed to ensuring that the system of justice in the United States operates effectively in a manner that affirms the principles of equality and justice. In keeping with our mission, and as a community of engaged law professors, we would like to offer the support and expertise of our members to help address systemic inequities that erode faith in our justice system and to facilitate discussion, dialogue, and concerted action to address the issues that ~~Michael Brown and the Ferguson~~ ^{Black people, Black Lives Matter} protests have raised at the local and national level. We must ensure that our system of justice gives historically subordinated populations assurance that the laws are being executed fairly. By acting in solidarity with ~~the people of Ferguson~~ ^{Black}, we seek to promote adherence to and the sanctity of civil and human rights principles in the United States. ~~the United States~~

In the wake of the events in ~~Ferguson~~ ^{the United States}, we call for:

- (1) upholding the principles of equality before the law;
- (2) implementation of a system of police accountability, oversight and integrity regardless of race, class or social standing;
- (3) safeguarding the right to speak freely and peacefully protest and acting to quell excessive police force that inhibits the exercise of these fundamental rights; and
- (4) working to eliminate divisive policing and justice policies and practices that demean people of color and view them as objects of threat and fear.

It is the responsibility of every lawyer to promote justice. SALT encourages law schools across the country to take affirmative steps to promote justice, eradicate racism and support their law school communities in light of pervasive injustices. SALT has started the following toolkit for law schools to use as we work together to educate the next generation of lawyers, support students of color and dismantle structural inequality and racism in the United States. Visit saltlaw.org for more resources, and to share your own ideas to end this cycle. We stand together in solidarity.

Suggested steps law schools can take to end the cycle of racism:

- Issue a statement from faculty and administration to demonstrate solidarity and signal an institutional commitment to anti-racist work
- Host a virtual Town Hall or series of listening sessions and community dialogues to create space to share the pain, frustration and ideas for corrections
- Invite speakers to discuss the ways in which the law can be used and has been used as a tool for change. This could include charging discretion for prosecutors, free speech advocates and sentencing disparities, among many other topics
- Require implicit bias training for all faculty members, administration, staff and students
- Develop courses with explicit focus on racial injustice to help law students better understand the context of black letter law as well as the experiences that people from historically marginalized backgrounds, and especially Black communities, face
- Conduct voter registration training to increase democratic participation and accountability for policy-makers committed to dismantling racism
- Host podcasts, teach-ins, and/or lecture series on structural inequality and racism, ally-ship, and more
- Develop a system for students to anonymously report microaggressions that occur in classrooms
- Require training on racial and cultural literacy and anti-racist frameworks for all faculty members, administration, staff and students
- Dedicate scholarships specifically for students of color that are not dependent on LSAT scores given the studies that exist around bias in testing
- Appoint a Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Provide affinity organizations with designated spaces for community building, gathering and programing

- Develop the ability to engage in rapid response when issues of racial injustice occur on campus, in your location, and in our country
- Create reading groups, writing opportunities and film screenings for students to consider experiences of people from historically marginalized backgrounds; these could also be expanded to include the role of lawyers in these experiences
- Ensure any symbols, statues, mascots, and more that have racial connotations are removed from campus
- Prioritize racial diversity in hiring and promotion of faculty and staff
- Training on legal support and advocacy for anti-racist protestors
- Commit to use of clinic resources for anti-racist advocacy work or client representation
- Require all student organization leaders to participate in diversity and inclusion training
- Implement concrete steps that can be implemented to support Black students, especially Black men
- Make diversity and inclusion values and efforts by the school more prominent on website materials and promotional materials
- Regularly survey and host focus groups with members of the law school community to evaluate diversity and inclusion efforts and determine whether individuals have a sense of belonging
- Establish regular meetings between Administration and student affinity groups
- Develop a faculty/staff/student diversity committee to work together on strategic initiatives around diversity and inclusion
- Incorporating equity inclusion-related contributions to the tenure and promotion guidelines
- Incorporating equity inclusion-related contributions on staff evaluations
- Develop programming on diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging issues for orientation