

We are the Black Leadership Group of UNITE HERE International Union.

We are organizers. We are elected officers. We are workers. We are community leaders and neighbors. We are parents, children, siblings, and kin. We are your Union family.

And we cannot breathe.

In the last three months we have seen companies line up to abandon us. We have seen them take away healthcare, guaranteeing that more people will fall ill. We have seen politicians shrug their shoulders as people go hungry. But while our Union has been thrown into crisis, our communities have been tossed into even deadlier devastation by ongoing racism and racist violence.

We have gotten sick faster and more often than others.
We have had fewer resources to get well.
Black men, women, and trans folks are murdered by police and citizens.
We have not enjoyed justice.
We keep burying people that we love.

Pain, fear, anger, and devastation hang heavy on our weary hearts. Sometimes we wonder if anyone can see that our people are killed by so many unjust causes. We lay awake at night not knowing what to do while racism keeps its foot on our necks, never lets up, never lets us take a break.
Can't anyone see that we can't breathe?

But we fight back, organizing workers to build power through our tears.
We fight back, making phone calls from our sick beds.
We fight back, distributing food even as we stretch our paychecks and family members lose their jobs.
We fight back, holding our loved ones tight and taking the streets because people who look like us meet violent deaths over and over and over again.

We fight for the right to keep breathing.

We carry forward a long and proud tradition of black union leaders organizing for Black freedom. And we will do so until our very last breaths.

Today we call upon you to stand with us. To join us in the fight for our lives -- just as we will always stand with you and fight for yours. We know that what happens to our communities can and does happen to others. And it will continue to happen so long as any of us stand idly by. We will stand with our Asian family through the rise in hate, with our Latino family, and our immigrant family discarded, detained, and left in cages. We will stand with our white kin who choose the fight for real liberty and justice for all.

We are calling on you to fight police brutality and anti-black violence with us as we continue to fight for economic justice because we love our Union, and we know that we have the power to emerge victorious over racism, anti-immigrant racism, over sexism, homophobia, and everything that threatens working people and their communities, such that finally -- at long last -- we all might breathe freely and have life abundantly.

WE CAN'T BREATHE
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Scott Marks

Organizing Director, Chair Black Leadership Committee

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*IU General Vice
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#BlackLivesMatter
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