



Duckworth Celebrates Juneteenth at Chicago Demonstration, Calls for Racial Justice

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CHICAGO, IL – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today joined Pastor Chris Harris of Bright Star Church and Bright Star Community Outreach for a faith-led peaceful demonstration to commemorate Juneteenth and to call for racial equality for Black Americans. Juneteenth celebrates the day enslaved Black Americans in Galveston, Texas, learned of their emancipation two years after the abolition of slavery. Photos from today's demonstration are available [here](#). In honor of Juneteenth, Duckworth released the following statement:

“155 years ago today, word finally spread to Galveston, Texas, that the enslavement of Black Americans had ended and that the states of America were united once more. It was a day of celebration, and in the century and a half since, Juneteenth has symbolized progress and how far our nation has come.

“But this year, with the scent of tear gas and the sound of peaceful protestors’ cries for justice still hanging in the air, Juneteenth is a reminder of how far we still have to go. This year, it’s a call to action to keep pushing, prodding and dragging our nation until in America, we’re not just created equal, but treated equally as well.

“Though the enslavement of Black Americans may have ended in 1865, it’s all too obvious that in the year 2020, Black Americans are still not free. Not when they’re still being killed in broad daylight without judge or jury, and not when they’re incarcerated at more than five times the rate of white Americans.

“So today, I want to thank Pastor Harris and everyone who has come together in peace and solidarity to bring about a tomorrow that’s no longer defined by yesterday’s

prejudices—a tomorrow in which everyone will recognize that Black Lives Matter. Because until every Black American can breathe without a knee on their neck, no American should feel as if we’re truly able to take a breath.”

After the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and countless others by police led to nationwide protests, Duckworth urged [Americans to fight for justice](#). Last week Duckworth helped introduce the [Justice in Policing Act of 2020](#), the first-ever bold, comprehensive approach to hold police accountable, change the culture of law enforcement and build trust between law enforcement and our communities. The proposal includes [provisions of Duckworth’s legislation](#), the *Police Training and Independent Review Act*, to strengthen accountability and transparency over law enforcement use of lethal force by rewarding states that enact laws requiring independent reviews, criminal investigations and when necessary, prosecutions of police officers who commit violent crimes.